

Important Announcement

To better meet the requirements of the news-stand trade, the publishers announce that, beginning with the present number, *THE SMART SET*, published on the 10th of each month, will bear the date of the month following the issue, instead of the current month, as heretofore. While the present number bears the imprint of both October and November, the advance of date involves the omission of no issue to subscribers.

Vol. II

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CONTENTS

Miss Vandeleur, Pirate	Helen Milecete	1
A Ballad of Being Broke	Frank Lillie Pollock	64
Society in Rome	Julien Gordon	65
Maiden-Hair	Claude M. Girardeau	68
Love in an Opera Box	Mary Stewart Cutting	69
The Want of You	Ethel M. Kelley	70
The Parting of the Waters	Alice Duer and Henry Wise Miller	71
Fog in the City	Clinton Scollard	76
The Study of the Strange	Helene Hicks	77
Two of a Kind	Douglas Dunne	79
The Coquette	Charles Hanson Towne	80
The Errors of Society	Rev. Braddin Hamilton	81
Egotism	Francis James MacBeth	86
On the Stairs	Carolyn Wells	87
The Dream	Virginia Woodward Cloud	88
Don Juan	Richard Hovey	89
Misplaced Sweetness	M. S. Holbrook	99
For a New Sensation	Roy Farrell Greene	99
A Ballad of Halloween	Theodosia Garrison	100
The Seating of Vester	Frank Roe Batchelder	101
Understanding	Elisabeth R. Finley	112
The Dilemma of Mr. Penwick	L. H. Bickford	113
The Captive	Lila Munro Tainter	116
The Proper "Girlie"	Jack London	117
Hate	Aloysius Coll	119
To a Briar Rose	Neva Lillian Williams	120
Unsentimental Tommy	Adèle Durand Holt	120
Between Nineteen and Two	Wolcott LeClear Beard	121
Midnight Madness	Charles Fitzhugh Talman	128
The Little Woman	E. Hough	129
Queen Marguerite	George Birdseye	131
With a Photograph	Minna Irving	132
Loose Beads	Claire K. Alden	133
L'Envoi	John Winwood	140
La Fin d'une Vie	Henri Dumay	141
A New Republic	Roy Farrell Greene	146
A Logical Conclusion	Dorothy Dorr	146
A Lane in Lenox	Kate Masterson	147
A Masque of Love	R. W. St. Hill	149
Words and Flowers	William Hamilton Hayne	150
Things Azure and Argent	Michael Gifford White	151
Concerning One Omar Khayyám	William J. Lampton	156
The Face of an Angel	J. D. Daskam	157
The Happy Ass	R. K. Munkittrick	160

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MISS VANDELEUR, PIRATE

By Helen Milecete

LETTER I

Northern Hotel, Liverpool.

MY DEAREST VERA:
Here I am just sailing for America—for Canada. I think this little country has had quite enough of me since my divorce case, don't you? I am going to be an old maid pirate—can a divorced woman be an old maid? I suppose not, but still I am not a wife, nor a widow, nor can I, I fear, have "Mrs." on my tombstone.

I am so glad that divorce is over. What I thought of most was, how horribly the court smelt, and how ugly the judge was, and didn't my husband—what should I call him? I think my Past would be the best name for him. What a fool I was to marry him! I can't even say I was so young, which is the excuse most girls make, nor would I dare—to you—say I was misunderstood. That is the common cry of all wives—that they are misunderstood. Are they? I wasn't. He, Colonel Gore, understood me too well, and I hated him. His superior air, his authority—and he *would* read my letters! That's why I am here now, alone, with my maid. Two thousand pounds is all the money I have, with no prospects, no home and no more money to come, no future and a large lettered past. I am off to Canada just for a lark, the last one I shall ever have. You know I was born there, when my father commanded his regiment.

Yet I am happy. You are shocked? I am gay. I am free.

I am just going down to the steamer.

The faithful Pringle has packed all my best dresses. I have a dream of a skating gown and a heavenly ball gown. I shall be the fashion. I shall be young again and frivolous once I am beyond the sky line. Farewell, angel. Expect my next letter from Halifax.

Yours always,
GAY.

How good you are! You don't believe me, I know. Some day I will explain Charlie and all the rest; meanwhile, think of me as your loving

GAY.

*S.S. Canadian,
The Mid Atlantic.*

MY DEAR VERA:

It's gorgeous—the sea, I mean. The coloring! the waves! the air! the crash in the bows, dear lass, and the keen air make me feel gay. Miss Vandeleur—that's me—has removed her wedding ring and thrown it into the Atlantic. I dare say a mermaid will find it and use it for her wedding, and I hope it will bring her luck. The career of the black pirate has begun. I don't want to kill people, as pirates always do. I only want a little happiness. I believe pirates only become such because they are bored and dull and lonely, and only want the fun of chasing ships, not the horror of plundering them and killing the men when caught.

The purser on this ship is a man of discrimination. I saw him when I came on board. My name was down as "Vandeleur and maid." He saw my ticket, and wrote "Miss Vandeleur and maid" on his list, and asked if he

was right. I said "Yes"—what else could I say? He added, with a noble bow, that I looked too young to be married. Why are married women popularly supposed to write dulness on their faces and marriage on their backs?

I must tell you about the passengers. I hope they did not see my photograph in the *Morning Scorcher*. It was so ugly, though, they would never recognize me if they had seen it.

There are three women on board, all ill. I am never ill, and I wear a pink toque and curl my hair! After that you will not take any further interest in my health.

The men are a mixture of the Englishman going out to join the garrison and the commercial traveler. I take no interest in the latter, but in the former I do. When you hear that the General, Sir Anthony Erskine, and his A. D. C., the Hon. Howard Morgan, are the principal passengers, you will gather that I am not dull.

For Sir Anthony you have heard about. I met him at your house, when my Past made me wear black and part my hair in the centre. I look hideous in black with my hair parted. I did not marry to be a nun; now it's curled, and I never will own a black frock. Sir Anthony, of course, does not know me. He is a credit to the British Army, tall, slight, with thick gray hair, an iron-gray mustache and brown eyes.

I sit by the captain at meals. At my first appearance I felt dreadfully frightened; the cold chill of the divorce court was in my bones; the fear caused by that horrible sketch in the *Scorcher* seized my soul, and I was pale, too pale, but Pringle and the little china pot saved me from utter destruction, and I sailed in to dinner—late, but secure of my good looks and my china-pot complexion. I did look nice; you know my figure is good, and my hair, so brown and queer, is odd in these days of peroxide. My eyes, so dull and dingy in the past, showed green and brown and witchlike in the noble looking-glasses in the saloon. You will observe I am not backward

in the appreciation of my charms. But my legs—how they shook! and I did wish I had taken a wee glass of brandy before I came into the world.

No ladies appeared at dinner. The ship was riding gaily on the top of the waves and rolling into the hollows with a twist that was very discomfiting, but I felt proud to think my insides were steady, though my poor legs were so weak and shaky.

A guilty conscience, you will murmur? Nothing so stupid, my dear—only the fear of having to turn back from Halifax because of that horrible portrait.

The A. D. C., the Hon. Howard Morgan, sat beside me, and Sir Anthony was opposite. The captain introduced us, and we talked gently—you know how one does—and then Sir Anthony insisted on taking me on deck to see the stars. How I longed to smoke! But I believe the unattached female is never allowed to do such a thing; a married woman can always say her husband taught her. We talked of all things, and the only disquieting incident was when he remarked he had a strange presentiment that he had heard my voice before. I suggested that his cabin might be near mine, but he said no, that he felt sure he had met me somewhere. Here prudence and propriety bade me seek my couch. Generals, however amiable, are not the most desirable society at night on board ship for an unprotected lady who wishes to preserve her immaculately new reputation.

Somehow it is hard to remember I am not married. I dread the women; some of them may know me. They always see those papers, crowd to hear a divorce case and love details of every sort. The rustle of silk gowns the day I got my freedom was like the wind in the trees, only not cooling, rather the reverse. I am sure my face blazed like a furnace.

Fortunately, in the middle of the conversation my maid appeared with my cloak and, shivering delicately, I departed, led to the companion by my new annexation, and followed by

Pringle, who is a treasure. I hope she won't be seasick. I should hate the stewardess's fussing, and Pringle, as you know, shares my cabin. I love the sea. I should like to stay on deck and watch the stars and the waves and feel free, free, free! Oh, how glorious! I could see the dark sea all around us, and the wake behind was shining like gold. Ah, my dear, what will you say when you hear the real truth? I am arrayed in my dressing gown now and trying to write in my cabin. I wish this voyage could last forever. No one to bother me, no solicitors, no ringing of bells, no cabs driving up, and, best of all, no husband. I have a huge pastille burning, and a large cigarette in one hand. I hear the bedroom steward asking Pringle if I am a Roman Catholic. Poor man, he imagines me at my prayers; let him continue his good opinion of me—it will do him no harm and it may benefit me. He thinks the pastille is incense; so it is, offered to the god of narrow-mindedness, which says women may not smoke except in secret. I shall invent a motto for myself—"Cigarettes next her heart and eau de cologne on her handkerchief.

How good of you to send me that wire to say farewell! Your letter also I found at the hotel. I may always consider your house my home? Dear, I have no home, but I know how good you are.

Your postscript amuses me; what about Charlie? Are you desirous of comforting the man who never turned up to clear himself and support me? He may be dead or in Africa, or perhaps America, for all I know. But I will go to bed and tell you more tomorrow.

Yours ever,

GAY.

LETTER II

MY DEAR:

I have not written for three days, for it was somewhat rough, and my hand shook. Now we are getting near land, and I feel afraid—afraid of

the future and of women. Those on board I have reduced to pulp by the bravery of my behavior and the attentions of my adorers. Every morning when, duly arrayed and curled, I make my appearance on deck, followed by Pringle with my rug, Sir Anthony with my smelling salts and Mr. Morgan with my cushions, the female element gaze with surprise and envy at my—well, my gown, I suppose.

Sir Anthony is more than attentive, and the captain is sublime. There is one woman here, a Mrs. Goldsmith, who lives in Halifax, where I am going to stay. She is fat and, I should think, fifty, but she imagines that she has found the secret of everlasting youth in a golden wig, a new set of teeth and a smile; she is very like a coquettish cow, but Sir Anthony assures me her dinners are good and that she is most kind, most hospitable. She is very anxious to know my family history. I told her that my father and mother are dead and I am alone in the world. She looked suspicious and said: "Even an aunt is a great safeguard." "A sort of policeman," I answered, and she said no more. Mr. Morgan and I tramp up and down the deck. He prides himself on being intellectual, and makes love to me, delicately, veiled by quotations from the minor poets.

Mrs. Goldsmith has struck up a mighty friendship with me. I feel as if I ought always to don a thick veil when I see her, she is so proper, so absolutely correct.

"My dear," she said, "you are a little younger than I am" (about twenty-five years, I suppose, but I am learning that fear of truth is the beginning of worldly wisdom), "and I will help you in all your difficulties and chaperon you when you go to tea in Sir Anthony's cabin."

Her self-sacrifice is marvelous, for she loves Sir Anthony and seems to fear me. She talked of a good marriage with the air of a missionary, and asked me if I was engaged. I said, "Not yet." My indecision was masterly, for she said, patronizingly:

"Can't I help you to make up your mind?" and added, "Men are all deceitful, but a husband must pay your bills."

I wonder what her experiences have been. She continued:

"You will marry a nice man in Canada with some money and a house on the North West Arm."

"What an awful name! What does it mean?" I asked.

"That is a small suburb of Halifax," she said.

"It sounds like a haven for wives," I retorted. "I don't want a North West Arm; I want two arms when I marry." And then she said:

"How witty!"

I thought I was leaving the spiteful women behind me, and she is the same as my dear friends who cut me in South Kensington. But there, what does it matter? Though to you and my heart I may as well confess that I am losing my nerve. The divorce court is a trying ordeal.

Mr. Morgan has left the minor poets and taken to quoting Shelley. I am rather bored by his sentiments, and—tell it not—a little fearful, for—well, no doubt I am needlessly apprehensive. Sir Anthony is very kind, so gentle, so thoughtful. He is always good to me, and said to-day:

"You should not be traveling alone, Miss Vandeleur."

"I have Pringle," I answered.

"You should have a husband—someone to love and look after you."

"A husband does not always fulfil either of those requirements," I said, while I despised myself for cheap cynicism.

"My dear," he answered, kindly, not sentimentally, "believe me, love is the best thing this world can give; loneliness is the worst."

"One can be lonely while not alone," I answered. "There is a companionship that stifles, that fetters." I paused. I felt like crying. Besides, how should I know anything about hateful companionship?

"You are too young to be so despairing," he answered.

We are very near land now. Mr. Morgan and I have spent the whole day on deck together. Sir Anthony was captured early by Mrs. Goldsmith and has remained at her side ever since.

It was a lovely evening; the coast showed dim and misty in the distance, the soft haze turned to gold as the sun touched it, and the throb, throb of the engines was soothing. Mr. Morgan was very quiet, and for the time had buried Shelley and all his works.

The dressing bell rang, and I struggled to rise gracefully from my long chair without displaying too much of my tan silk stockings.

"Don't move," he said, "I want to talk to you."

"Be quick, then."

"I can't talk to order," he remarked, fretfully, "like a phonograph. I wanted to ask you—well, I love you."

I gazed at the sea, the ship and the sky.

"You are silent. Is it so surprising? You knew it, you must have known it," impatiently.

I looked at him. There he was, fair, young, smooth-faced, with blue eyes that sparkled and looked full of—what? passion, perhaps, but not love. Then before my eyes came another face—dark brown, hard, with a scar on the left cheek and a white mark across the upper part of the forehead. What woman would wear the image of a tanned, world-weary face next her heart when a fresh, smooth one could be there instead?

"Rubbish!" I said, shortly. "You don't love me." O Propinquity, thy victims are many! "Thank you, Mr. Morgan, but I can never marry."

"Marry!" he repeated, with a little laugh, that sounds in my ear now, that seems to hit me and to make my cheeks flame.

"It is getting very cold, Miss Vandeleur," and Sir Anthony stood behind us.

Mr. Morgan sprang to his feet.

"I am cold," I answered, and went below.

I did not go to dinner; I felt

unnerved, shaken, lonely. Pringle brought me some soup and I had a wee bottle of champagne. Then I lighted my pastille and my cigarette, but the beloved smoke was not soothing, so, wrapped in my big fur coat, I went on deck. The ship was rushing through the water and the stars were bright; like a great flame Orion shone over my head, and suddenly sheets of light seemed to glow and dance, slowly, grandly, across the sky. I remembered I had read of this dance in a Canadian night, when the lights flash across the heavens. Is it those who have gone before looking out of Heaven's gate, hoping, perchance, that the loved ones they have left behind may see the flashings of the lights of Heaven as the gates open and shut, and find courage? I wonder.

They soothed me. Whom have I there to care? Surely my mother loves me still, and you think, dear Vera, that she will be weeping for my sins if she knows; but you do not know all. I will tell it to you when I am on dry land again.

A step disturbed my meditations, and Mr. Morgan stood before me. He looked fresh and gay.

"Taking the air?" he said, cheerfully, and I answered:

"Yes."

"I won't ask for an answer to my question yet," he said. "When you are settled and can receive me, I would like to point out the advantages of it to you."

"I shall never marry anyone," I answered. "Good-night."

But I did not feel afraid of him; somehow, the night, the air and the gorgeous sky had revived me.

What do you think he means, Vera? I have told you everything faithfully, and I know he is not in love with me.

Well, my dear, we are getting near the end of the voyage, and I am sorry. I think I shall go as a stewardess when my money is all spent. I don't wonder the Flying Dutchman sails the sea forever, but I suppose he would give —what? his soul? to be on land again.

How solemn I am getting! Prepare for my next letter from Halifax.

Yours ever,

GAY.

What a silly name! I wonder why I was called it? We are there. I will tell you of the glorious view as we strolled up the harbor, for we did merely stroll. The wharf is crowded; the custom house people are there, too. Sir Anthony is having a grand reception. I hear Mr. Morgan's boyish laugh above the din, and as for me, well, there is no one to kiss me on the cheek for courage. I wonder if it will ever be mouth on mouth for love.

LETTER III

King's Hotel, Halifax.

Oh, my dear Vera, the days are lovely, the air is like champagne, and I am in a whirl of gaiety, of dances, teas and drives. I am going to a ball to-night—a real ball!—given by Sir Anthony, and my gown—my triumph by Félix—is all ready for me to put on. I have been here ten days—days of terror at first, of doubt, of— Well, they are over now. I am feeling gay, gay, gay—think of it! I am sure you remember me sobbing over cold tea in those dreary Porchester Road rooms the day before I sailed; now I have forgotten yesterday and to-morrow, and I have the joy of living in my blood. I am getting fat; my eyes are bright, and I never require any of the pink complexion that dwells in the little china pot.

I got your letter the day after I arrived. Dear, I know you are worrying about me. I laugh when I think of Charlie. What can one expect from a mere man? You say that I ought to be with him; no, my dear, surely you forget—I have to wait six months. Besides, Charlie has fled; my late lamented did not get his damages out of him, so my solicitors said. Charlie belonged to no club; he left his rooms in Jermyn Street, as you know, and can't be found. You

think that Charlie Woodward was an assumed name? You also think that he is some great man, of vast and high rank, a man with a wife, for whose sake he would not face the public and disgrace? Some of your thoughts are wonderfully correct, some very much off the right road. But I don't want to think of my Past, with a big P. The present is gloriously cheerful.

Mrs. Goldsmith started my campaign, and all the notable people have followed her. They have taken me on Sir Anthony's recommendation; an unmarried General is a great joy to the place. Who knows whom he may marry?

Why am I so happy? I am back in the old life, the old air. I believe there is nothing like the air one breathed first; anyway, I feel born again, new. But I am wandering, and my career demands attention. Mrs. Goldsmith launched me; she came for me on the second day of my arrival and took me to a big tea; everyone was there, smart women and pretty ones. (How seldom are women both smart and pretty!) Lots of soldier men, also. The men of the place are always at work, and don't patronize the parties much. Led by Mrs. Goldsmith, who is well off and a power, I made my first appearance. They were all very nice to me, and my visitors since then have been a huge army. I have dined three times at Sir Anthony's—an unattached woman, without a boring husband, is useful, for she lends variety to the ordinary Noah's Ark official dinner, and an odd and perhaps amusing man can be thrown in.

Mr. Morgan is my dearest friend. He has sent one of his horses, a big bay, every day for me to ride. His servant escorts me, and we scour the country. Oh, the life and the air in the glorious gallops we have every day! I don't know where we ride, but that doesn't matter; down warm, grassy roads, with the red of the maple and the yellow of the birch, that seem to be singing their swan song in a symphony of joy and tri-

umph to the end of the Summer. The days are warm still, but get cold at night.

I met such an interesting woman to-day; *woman*, did I call her? She is a girl, tall, slight, with lovely blue eyes and auburn hair, but her eyes look so terrified, as if she saw wolves and murder or something awful in front of her. She is married, and her name is L'Esterre. I wonder if she is not happy. Perhaps it is only a look; I have often known women who look sympathetic, and ice isn't harder than they are.

I am getting fonder of Sir Anthony; he is all a man should be to a woman. I am hard and cold; no protestations could move me; no ardent love-making make me care. I have dug a grave and buried things in it, and every day when I wake I say, "I have forgotten," and every time I say it I know that I remember, just the same. But though I say no protestations could move me, the strong arm of a man appeals to me, the attentions offered so quietly, so thoughtfully—kindnesses that no words can repay—make me grateful, so grateful.

He thinks of everything; he sends me books and fruit; my rooms are full of the most lovely flowers. His carriage comes for me whenever he knows I am going to a party, and everything is done so considerately, so thoughtfully; he never intrudes himself; he has been to see me once only since I came. My dear, he is a man in a thousand—a man who deserves to be loved as I shall never love anyone. But oh, the joy of being taken care of!

Poor Vera, how tired you will be of my rhapsodies, and I haven't told you anything in answer to your letter. What you really want to know I have not mentioned. Well, to be truthful, I loathe returning to the past again. I dread writing it down; the things I have never told anyone you want me to tell you, and I will tell you, for you ought to be told, both for my sake and yours. But now I feel shaky and miserable,

and in a few minutes I am going to the ball, dressed in a dream.

My last ball was given by the Downshire Hunt. How tired I was! and I danced all night with Colonel Allen. The women all pretended to be shocked; he is no favorite of fortune or of mothers. He has a charming voice and eyes that seem to tell every woman he meets that he loves her, but there is a bond between us that will never be broken, though I am nothing to him nor he to me. I think it is because he speaks the same language—all people do not—and I know his story. Bad, wild, reckless he may be, but—well, he adored my mother. How angry Colonel Gore was with me that night! He glared at me as I sat in corners with Colonel Allen or flew round the room in his arms. When we returned to our wee house near the barracks, he nearly flung my bedroom candlestick at me, for you know we had reached the two bedroom candlestick stage very soon after we were married, don't you? Two rooms are healthy, but lonely, and one quarrels much more. One can hardly keep up the din of battle always with a husband who shares one's bed.

Now I must cease; Pringle grows rampant. I shall write about the ball to-morrow.

The Day After.

It was a ball to dream of—heavenly flowers, a good floor, divine music, and more partners than I knew what to do with. But am I getting old? Men in a mass don't appeal to me. They were more than kind, but the desire for the society of the indiscriminate young man gets weak at twenty-four, while it revives and is strong at forty-two. My gown was heavenly—a dream of soft chiffon and lace, made on lace. No gown looked like it. By the way, this ought to be called the "naked year;" we seem to be taking off more and more. The only addition we have made to our attire is earrings. Some of the women here might be so pretty, but they do not

know how to use the possibilities. With brains and a good hairdresser they could be quite lovely.

Well, I got there late; the General met me and took me into the room, and I was surrounded. I felt afraid that I might see someone I knew or who knew me, but no one seemed ever to have seen me before, though they gazed at me with all their eyes, in which, thank heaven, was no recognition. I have lost my taste for green apples and very young men, but I discoursed madly with the best of them and talked rubbish with the gaiety of sixteen. One sporting boy in the gunners danced with me six times and was enamored of my charms, for he tried to put his arm round me in a dark, secluded corner, that I had considered safe with him. He reproached me plaintively when I said:

"I don't care for that sort of thing," and he answered:

"You are very cold."

He worried me. I am always a fool, and I wondered if he had ever seen me before. I had the next dance with Sir Anthony. I was tired—deadly tired—and my heart felt sick of it all—the noise, the music and the men. Like a fool, I did not dance, and Sir Anthony was so kind, so gentle, that I sat and wept. Think of it! You will exclaim: "You, weeping!" We were under a bright light, so he laid his hand on my arm and just let me cry. I am a fool. I sobbed, and he called to one of his servants, who brought some champagne. Then I laughed; and if the laugh was not merry, it was a substitute for tears, and better than they are. With what horror my good three years' System—an excellent name for my three years' husband, isn't it?—would have gazed at me drinking champagne in the greenhouse, with Sir Anthony fanning me with the devotion of a lover and my eyes a little red from my tears!

Colonel Gore liked the evening party that is now a little obsolete, with a little music, cake and sherry. I met him at one given by my relatives,

who lived at Blackheath. They had come from India, and I had never seen them. They wrote that we should all be so glad to meet. That gladness is like the air in soda-water, it soon vanishes if exposed for very long, and I did not feel exhilarated. Family reminiscences bore me. Colonel Gore and I amused each other, for he was a relation on the other side, and neither of us remembered nor cared when Fanny and William were married, sixty years ago. When I mildly suggested that my father and mother were not married then, and if I did remember Fanny's and William's wedding-day it would be highly improper, the company looked pale. I felt grateful to Colonel Gore for that evening, and we drifted into matrimony; but one should never marry on gratitude, it is too stodgy. I hate middle-aged passion. It is like weak tea in the morning; one longs for mad music, strong wine.

How much I have written and how little I have told you about the ball! I had four dances with Sir Anthony and three with Mr. Morgan, who has not mentioned his desire for solitary conversation with me. He is only a boy. Dear Vera, good-night.

Yours ever,

GAY.

LETTER IV

The Day of All Souls.

WELL, I have just come from church, where I have been praying for the souls of the dead and the souls of the weary living. There is a little church near my hotel. It is dark and quiet, and the music is good. A pale young priest with big dark eyes and red lips like a Cupid sang vespers for the dead. The flowers looked so lovely, the white were so peaceful and pale against the altar, while the screen was done with bright red chrysanthemums, verily symbolic of the path of pain the souls have to travel before they get home.

You accuse me of not being liter-

ary. How can I be, dear Vera? You know I am not a genius—to be one would be appalling. I should have to wear vile clothes and think of nothing but work.

A genius should always live in a little back room and make vast creations to astonish the world. Books should be read, but the authors thereof are not meant to be looked at. I would rather be a view than a book.

You know Lassen's song, "All Souls' Day?" I have just been singing it. The German words are splendid: "*Ein Tag im Jahre ist den Toten frei.*" I am dead, but I will have my one day yet. You say that I am trying to whitewash myself. No, I am not. Besides, whitewash does not wear, it cracks if one move. Now, enamel might stick, but I doubt it.

I have seen a lot of Mrs. L'Esterre. We are thinking of going for a driving tour—a queer time of year, you will say. We are waiting until the first snow comes, and then we are going down the coast to the westward, where the pine woods are. Her husband is to drive tandem and me, a good combination. We are to take snowshoes and make excursions from the various farmhouses where we put up. Mr. Walters will drive Mrs. L'Esterre. He is about thirty, a man with a face like a wall, and blue eyes. They are not much interested in each other, but I think they have something that binds them to one another—what, I don't know. They skate and drive and dance together, and talk very little, but when they do converse they look as if they were glad to be natural and were speaking over a grave.

It is a lovely day, and I am going shopping. I never told you how pretty my rooms are. I have a bedroom and a sitting-room, both looking out over the harbor, the glorious blue water with its ships and steamers and tugs. The old tramp steamers, on which the pilgrims of life travel, appeal to me; the big liners, with their bands, their electric lights and smart women, interest me not at all.

Across the harbor I see the bright

scarlet leaves of the huckleberry bushes and the white granite cliffs shine in the sun, while George's Island, with its soldiers and guns, is as green as if it were Summer.

I have had a strong brandy-and-soda—oh, my dear, my dear, the terror of the world has gripped my heart; all the realities that I had buried, that I had forgotten, are with me once more. Like gray troopers, they seem to be coming round every corner of my mind. I dressed, I looked nice, I went forth to buy some big flower jars for the branches Sir Anthony sends me.

The town was very full, and I met people I knew all along my route. In front of the largest shop I stopped. I wanted to see in the big glass in the window how I looked. I felt dissatisfied; my brown cloth gown and coat are beautifully made, but my hat is too bright, too red. I looked, I thought, like a funeral with a comic opera on top. I turned away. On the other side of the road was Mrs. L'Esterre, smiling; she was coming over to speak to me.

My smile froze on my face; I stood absolutely petrified with terror; I know my teeth began to chatter and my jaw to fall, and the top of my immaculately waved head felt cold. There, *before me*, gazing at me with something in his eyes that I had never seen before, stood the three years' System—Colonel Gore!

I tried to hold up my head, I prayed for an open coal hole in the pavement into which I might fall and break my back or my legs—*anything*, to get away from his eyes; but of course there wasn't any hole; and I saw Mrs. L'Esterre, Captain Smith and Mr. Walters bearing down on us.

"For God's sake," said the System, "brace up; don't faint," and a hateful voice behind us said:

"Hullo, Colonel!"

There stood Mr. Morgan, a placid smile on his lips, a cigarette in his hand.

"You are coming to the tea?" he said to me, but I stood dumb. I had forgotten everything.

What would Colonel Gore say?

"I have neuralgia," I muttered at last.

"You will come and have tea with me," announced the System. "Morgan, tell me of a decent place where we sha'n't get poisoned. Miss Vandeleur and I have met before."

How did he know my name? Vera, did you tell him?

"Mitchell's is all right," answered Mr. Morgan. "I must be off."

Then I found my tongue.

"I don't want any tea," I said.

"I must talk to you. Come; Mitchell's will do as well as any place."

He led the way and I meekly followed. I felt a horribly irresistible desire to laugh stealing over me, for tears, hysterics! We entered Mitchell's and he ordered tea. Fortunately, the room was empty, but the silence was terrifying.

"For heaven's sake, speak!" he said.

"I have nothing to say."

"Tell me, you are not poor? You are here alone—why alone? Where is that—the—he—that man?" he stammered, pitifully.

I laughed a little, and he looked irritated.

"What are you doing here?" I demanded.

"I am on the staff."

"On the staff! stationed here! What cruelty!"

"I wanted to tell you that you can stay here quite happily; I never go out; all these parties these foolish women have don't appeal to me—I hate them. You will never be annoyed by being in the same room with me, and I need not say that your secrets are as safely locked up as my own."

"I was so happy!" I retorted. "Why did you come to make me miserable?"

"Hush!" he answered. "I must take you back to your hotel. I only wanted to reassure you; you looked at me as if I were a wild beast or a fiend coming to hurt you."

"I felt afraid, terrified, as if you were a steam roller bent on crushing me."

Why am I so often flippant? I could see that my manner annoyed him. To cultivate the expression of one's feelings is a nuisance, to hide them under flippancy is often the signing of one's death warrant.

I rose.

"I will walk home," I said; so together in the dark of the November day we walked down the street to my hotel.

"Will you," he said, "tell me one thing? Tell it as if you were on your deathbed. Where is he? Why are you alone? Shall you marry him when the decree *nisi* is pronounced?"

He gripped my arm and hurt me. I felt paralyzed. He stopped near a bright electric light and stared at me.

"Never!" I answered, shaking his hand off my arm; "never!"

"Good God!" said the System, and we reached the hotel.

"You will let me help you, if you need it?" he said, and took off his hat and was gone.

I came up to my rooms, to my pretty, peaceful abode, that I hate now because he is near. I cried, I cried until my eyes were too swollen to open. Then I rang for a brandy-and-soda and Pringle, and putting on a tea gown, ordered her to leave me and bring me my dinner at eight. Then I locked the door, and now I am facing life and all the rest of it in torture.

What shall I do? Shall I go? Go where? I can't face loneliness in England. Shall I stay and brave it out? I have announced my intention of remaining here for the whole Winter; what will they think if I suddenly depart? What does *he* think? Isn't it an awful situation?

I can't eat, I can't sleep; I will take a few drops of chloral; anything is better than counting the hours. To-morrow I dine at Sir Anthony's. Well, I will dine, I will be brave, I will not care; but oh, I feel weak and weary, and there's no place for me.

Thine always,

I can't sign myself "Gay," for I am misery itself.

P. S.—I must tell you I dined at Sir Anthony's. I put on my china-pot complexion, and Colonel Gore took me in to dinner!

Fancy! a husband taking his divorced wife in to dinner. One can't forbid the banns, but one feels as if one ought to forbid the dinner.

LETTER V

MY DEAREST:

Here I am in bed with a cigarette in my hand and a pastille next my heart. I care not for the susceptible conscience and noses of the hotel servants. Why should I be responsible for their imagination?

I have decided that I will no longer be dismayed. I will no longer fear. To-day is mine, of to-morrow I will not think. I played the game well last night, and so did he. I will give him so much credit. He is a brave soldier, and so am I. I belong to a legion that carries no colors except the red rosette of bravery, and that we wear hidden next the heart. The desire for victory makes me impulsive and foolish, too, sometimes, for I have nothing to make me fear. You will contradict me in your next letter, I know; I wait for that to explain my meaning more fully.

Well, to return to the dinner, which I seem to be in danger of forgetting, it was a great success; a chef is a wonderful help in providing the rose-color of life. Colonel Gore and I talked amiably, but once or twice I felt as if I must scream, or rise and say: "Do you see this man? He is my husband (*was* my husband, I suppose I should write) and he divorced me." My ill-regulated mind, no doubt, inspired these thoughts. But we talked of my driving tour and wondered how long it would be before the first snow came.

Colonel Gore assured me that I would find snowshoes clumsy at first, but excellent vehicles for motion in the deep snow. "In fact," he said, "it would be impossible for you to get on without them in the soft snow."

We talked about the rink and wondered if I should find skating very difficult. I felt amused, if I had only dared to laugh, for the System looked so solemn.

At last Sir Anthony broke into our question-and-answer conversation by saying genially to me:

"Gore will help you to learn to waltz; he is the best dancer we have."

"I did not know you could waltz," said I, for once speaking indiscreetly.

"I was stationed here long ago, before I met you," he answered.

Mr. Morgan had not been provided with a Jill to lead in to dinner and was bounded on one side by a most mountainous gentleman, a minister of ships, or fish, or hens (I don't know the names of half the officials here), and on the other by a lady whose exuberant charms were laced into a last year's dinner dress, with evidently a last year's waist, and she alternately declined food and gazed at the door with a yearning in her eyes that only tight stays could produce. Poor Mr. Morgan's countenance expressed boredom unutterable, and he rushed into our conversation with an impetuosity that I blessed, and said:

"Oh, Miss Vandeleur, I was your first friend on Canadian soil. I claim the privilege of teaching you to dance."

"Is the deck of a ship soil?" I asked.

Then an argument arose.

Was the ship owned in England or Canada? To what line did it belong? How slow the steamers were getting, how many had lately been lost; the Gulf as a Summer port would have to be given up. The lady of the undulating figure explained bitterly that her new evening dresses had not arrived (hence that small waist, I thought), and the official gentleman tried to make himself heard above the din, which was tremendously loud, while, unheard in it, Colonel Gore turned to me and said:

"I am going to live at York Redoubt, a fort some distance from the town. This is my last appearance," and he returned to his dinner.

"When do you go?"

"Next week."

After dinner, the ladies—it was a little awkward without a hostess—sat in the drawing-room and had a real good gossip on the wickedness of their servants. The lady of the tight bodice had sought the shelter and refuge of the dressing-room, and I turned my attention to some poetry I found on the table.

At last I heard one murmur:

"I am sure Mr. Morgan is extremely alarmed. He is Sir Anthony's heir." Then they almost whispered.

Why Mr. Morgan should be alarmed I could not tell, and the entrance of the men (I could not smoke, and oh, how I longed for a cigarette!) created a little stir. The other ladies spread out their skirts and grinned, but Mr. Morgan, Sir Anthony and Colonel Gore stopped by my corner. Mr. Morgan sat down and said:

"I am fatigued."

Colonel Gore fell into the clutches of the fish man, who is Minister of Marine, and Sir Anthony hastened to dispel the frowns that were gathering on the faces of his guests.

"Do you like kissing?" asked Mr. Morgan, gazing at his well-shod feet.

"No." I could see the System keeping one eye on me and one on his prosy old companion.

"Ah!" said this audacious youth. "I thought at dinner how I should love to get up and kiss you."

"Really!" said I, gaily. "If you had wished to turn such a noble assembly into a bear fight, you would have succeeded, for I should have run away."

"I think it is so selfish," in the voice of one pleading for a much needed reformation, "of you women to refuse a man what can't hurt you and would amuse him."

I laughed. "Suppose, for instance, there was one woman in the world."

"I hope she would not be like that one," he interrupted, nodding in the direction of the last year's waist.

"Don't interrupt. Suppose you wanted to kiss one special woman, would another do as well?"

I lowered my voice so that the System might not hear, but he did, for he stamped his foot impatiently and turned round to glare at me. He makes me feel as if I were standing facing a bright incandescent light when he glares like that; and think of it! I once called him Dick—but not for very long; soon he became Richard. If I were a man I would not live with a woman who called me Richard.

"No," replied Mr. Morgan. "I suppose not," slowly. "Do you feel like that?"

"Like what?"

"The one woman or the one man way?"

"I call that an unwarrantable question."

"Then I know you do," triumphantly. "I wonder when you will let me kiss you," somewhat seriously.

"When? Never," gaily.

"Don't say that. Don't be so cruel—so cold. By the way, Mallock blurted out at mess last night that you are very cold. He said—"

"I don't want to hear what he said," I exclaimed.

"Old Gore shut him up. You know him?"

"I know him."

Mr. Morgan did not continue to discourse about Colonel Gore.

"I wish you loved me," he observed, sadly.

"Well, I don't," I retorted.

"Will you ever?" beseechingly. "Do try. I'd be so good to you. We'd have a ripping time. How shall I know if you ever think of it?"

He sat in silence, evidently thinking; then he exclaimed:

"Wear a red rosette, will you, if you ever can love me? Be my lady of the red rosette. It would be becoming to you, just above your heart, and I'll know and I'll—"

"Morgan," said Sir Anthony, "get Miss Kitson's music."

Like a sulky little boy, he rose and said:

"Is she here?"

Sir Anthony nodded, and I sat meditating. The System stood before me.

"Is there anything I can do for you?"

"Nothing," I replied.

"Watch old Gore," said Mr. Morgan, when he returned; "he is supposed to be in love with Miss Kitson. She is not a beauty, but she is a good sort. You know she belongs to the High Church, and she won't have him."

"What has the Church got to do with it?"

"Why, he divorced his wife."

"Did he?" Was the voice mine?

"Yes. She *was* a goer," pleasantly. "But anyway, things have come to a deadlock there. Miss Kitson's father is anxious for the match. He says, 'My daughters are a fine family, but they have scruples, scruples.' He is a rum old Scotchman. Gore might do worse. And she would be a stayer, a relief after the last one."

"Probably Miss Kitson will forget her scruples," I said, as I watched Colonel Gore. He seemed very much absorbed in her. She wore her hair flat, her skin was good, but freckled, and her color was too purple to be considered beautiful, yet she looked very nice and quiet, and no doubt would suit him well.

I wonder if he will marry her.

Friday Night.

I put your letter away, and now I will finish it. I was so glad to hear from you. You urge me to come home, live in a two pair back on fifty pounds a year, and try and get the indefinite something to do. What could I do? No, I am out on the wide sea now, and there is no discharge in this war. St. Paul was a wise man.

The snow has come. The whole country is white; slowly and quietly the downfall began, and now the sleigh-bells ring clearly on the air, but I don't feel a bit cold, though the thermometer is very low.

I went for a ride to-day. Mr. Morgan sent his horse. I was afraid a little at first, but I braced up, and it was glorious.

We galloped through the pine trees, and the snow was packed even and yet soft, for my horse's feet made no noise on it. I came home, glowing with the air and warmth, and now I have on a tea gown and am at peace. When all my money is spent I shall go and ride in a circus. I can ride well. Think of always traveling and waking up every day in a new place; on the other hand, think of sleeping in a different bed every night! I am only a vagabond, after all, and love the joys of the road, but I suppose the day will come when they will be dust and ashes and rheumatism.

Farewell.

Yours always,

GAY.

LETTER VI

On the Road.

MY DEAREST:

If you only knew the difficulties under which I have labored to write you a letter! For we have been driving for a week, and I provided myself with lots of note paper and pens, but no ink. At each farmhouse ink has been absent, hence no letter. Mr. L'Esterre has just interrupted me; we are going on now, so I must cease. They fear a big snowstorm, and we must get into better quarters, as these are very primitive.

Camp near Herring Cove.

We are not far from home now, but the big storm is raging, and we are hoping the snow may pack in two or three days, and then we can go on. We are in a lumber camp. They have given us, Mrs. L'Esterre and me, a big log hut that is warm and clean. The banks of snow round it keep out the wind. A huge fire roars in the middle, and outside, all day, the wind has been moaning, and now it has increased to a shriek. I write under difficulties, but I have so much to tell that I must pour out my soul. Our beds are made of hemlock, covered with rugs; never have I slept so well

as on this soothing couch. Our toilet—well, I shall take off my shoes and put on a flannel dressing gown. Mrs. L'Esterre is gazing at the fire. I hear wild sounds of revelry from the camp; Mr. Walters and Mr. L'Esterre are there, and no doubt they are all outdoing one another in their tales of adventures, or—who knows?—of women. One of the men has just come in with a load of wood for us for the night; we must keep up our fire, else we shall feel on our throats before dawn the hand of the spirit whose face no man can see.

We have had a glorious time. The weather has been perfect, very cold, still and clear, with bright sunshine.

We have driven miles every day; the horses seem to love their work. Sometimes we have stopped for two days and had a long tramp on snowshoes. I can manage them quite well now, and we do cover the ground quickly.

One day we went to the lake where the Indian girl died with her lover. They threw themselves from the cliff because she would not marry an old chief her fond papa had selected for her. We went there on snowshoes. The country would have been im-passable without the snow, Mr. L'Esterre told me; huge rocky boulders and bushes would have prevented my progress, anyway. The lake is big; it was frozen, and lay white against the black rocks around it, and at the end a stream rushed out over a huge rock and down again with a tremendous thud. The stream seldom freezes, the force of the water is too great. The Indian girl ran away on her wedding morning and met her lover here, and together they jumped into the water by the rocks. Their bridal star shone only for one minute, and now the Indians believe that at night a dark canoe shoots out from the rapids, and in it are the girl and her lover, returning for an hour from the Spirit Isle.

It is very extraordinary, and due to reflection, Mr. L'Esterre tells me, that I really felt I saw a canoe, with two crouching figures in it, coming

toward me through the spray. It was a glorious day, and we were late leaving the Lake of the Mist. We had our lunch on the edge. Never was I so hungry, and when we had walked up the hill the sun had already gone down and flames seemed to be moving across the sky. The aurora was gorgeous as we went home. It almost seemed as if I could hear distant music. I walked with Mr. Walters. He is not clever, but very useful, and I need not exhaust myself making conversation for him. Mrs. L'Esterre has such an odd, jerky manner to her husband—she seems so nervous and frightened!

I felt very tired, and so I arrayed myself in my one tea gown and tried to find comfort on the farmhouse sofa. I do miss Pringle; my hair—well, it curls naturally, and—tell it not—I never do it up. I braid it like a schoolgirl, and it suits me. Still, sometimes I long for evening dress. If I once embark on descriptions of the air, the absolute stillness of the snow-wrapped land and the joy of the creak of the snowshoes and the sleigh runners on the snow, I shall bore you immensely. My thoughts, which seem mighty to me, will be paltry to you, if I express them.

The sofa was full of bumps, so I sat in the corner of the big farmhouse sitting-room; the huge log fire burned and dimmed and crackled, and I fell asleep. Something woke me, a low moan of agony. I looked up; in my corner it was dark, and by the fire stood Mrs. L'Esterre, and near her a man; he was tall, lithe, long-limbed, and his face was hard and set. He had the look of an Indian.

"*You!*" she said, and her voice was unlike her soft tones, with scorn—and love, I could have sworn—in it. "What are you doing here?"

"I have come for you."

"For me?"

"Surely you heard, surely you know—haven't you hungered for me as I have for you? I was shipwrecked, I have been—"

"Listen!" she interrupted. "I would have died last year to have

known you loved me; now I am dead, dead, and you left me to bear the burden. It was mad for me to have stayed at that hotel alone, maddest of all to have dined with you in a private room. My aunt was there—she saw me—"

"I know, I know. I have written to her to tell her. I have the money now, my uncle is dead, and you will be mine, mine, *mine!*"

Was it only a woman's scream that rang through the room?

The man took her in his arms.

"Hush, sweet. You belong to me. It is all over."

"All over? You think you can wipe away the scars of a lifetime by words. Listen," hurriedly; "when you left me I was desperate, heart-broken. Aunt Mary came to me; she said awful things." She gasped as she spoke. "She said I was all that was bad; in vain I denied it. We came home. She said Mr. L'Esterre would marry me—he loved me—to save me and my name. She talked of the others and said I had ruined them all. I waited, waited, waited; you never wrote, never came. You had told her, you had said I was—"

"I? Why, L'Esterre told her. He saw us; he—my God, Phil, don't look at me with those eyes of horror! L'Esterre told her in London, and they followed us to Liverpool. I have her letter—she wrote to me. I only got it the other day at the club in New York—"

Shall I ever forget her face?—scared with anguish no words could describe.

"I am his wife. I married him six months ago. He saved my name, and for the others' sake, my sisters' sake, I—" She fell at his feet, inert and half-senseless.

"Don't, Phil, don't! he cried. "My God! I see it all! "Why did I leave you?"

Then, Vera, I got up and ran.

They did not notice me. My one idea was to help them say good-bye alone, for that they would say good-bye I felt sure.

I did sentry, up and down, up and

down, outside that door for hours, it seemed. How he had come here, what he was doing, I don't know. I only know they were lovers, and I—

Mr. Walters came in, brushing the snow from his feet and whistling "Tommy Atkins."

I had to trust him.

I told him, not what I had heard but that they were there together, and he—well, he said:

"Poor soul!"

"Where is *he*?" I asked.

"He?" contemptuously. "Up at Hartigan's; he's safe until morning."

Then we waited, waited.

At last the man came out.

"Walters!" he gasped. "How can I get away?"

"Walker will lend you a sleigh. Come with me."

Afterward he told me he had given Mr. De la Bère a stiff brandy-and-soda and sent him away, bound for—no one knew where.

I took her to sleep in my room, and she never said one word, but I could see the agony in her eyes, and she sobbed half the night.

Next day we came on here.

I drove her. We came in Mr. Walters's sleigh, and the two men went together. I wonder how much Mr. Walters knows; *all*, I fancy. I didn't enjoy my drive. She—Phil (what a dear little name!)—talked as if she were dreaming, and I hardly felt the joy of holding the reins, for her face looked deathly and her eyes were full of terror.

Mr. L'Esterre is just as gay as ever. I don't like his lips, they are cruel. I wonder what she will do.

Friday.

Are you tired, my Vera, of my rambling adventures? I hope not. You say I never mention Charlie, and you wonder how I can bear to see Colonel Gore again. One bears most things; it is only starvation that kills. I would like the passionate love of a good man once, but I shall never get it. I am draining the cup of life to the dregs alone, my Vera. We go

back to-day, stop at Umlaw's for tea and dine in Halifax to-night. They are all coming to dinner in my rooms. It will be better for her; she seems numb, dead, and he is just the same.

Saturday.

I am here; my rooms are bright with flowers, my hair is well done. Pringle has fallen in love with a gunner, and Sir Anthony was here this morning. I think he is in love with me, and I feel ashamed. Yesterday when we arrived at Umlaw's there were a lot of people before us who occupied the best sitting-room, to our woe. We did not see them, but as they came out to go away I saw Colonel Gore and Miss Kitson. They seemed so friendly, so happy, and I was outside, alone.

"You know what I feel," he said to her as they stood in the doorway.

I was waiting for my sleigh, and, dressed in my furs with such a high collar, he did not know me.

"I know," she said, softly. They drove off together, after he had wrapped her up tenderly.

What a pig he was to me! He never wrapped *me* up tenderly.

Yours ever, dearest,

GAV.

If Sir Anthony asks me to marry him, I shall tell him my whole history.

I had a long talk with Mr. Walters to-night. He is rather phlegmatic, but he brightens when I mention Phil. I fancy she might have made him different if she had loved him. You will have gathered the whole of the story from my wandering account. Mr. L'Esterre worked his game, and she was the victim. She had gone to Liverpool to say a harmless farewell to a forbidden lover. L'Esterre, who was madly in love with her, discovered that she intended to make this contraband excursion and made her aunt do the heavy father business. Then De la Bère vanished. His ship was wrecked, but she didn't know that. They all came

here, and the aunt worked the never-to-be-forgiven dodge, and L'Esterre played the virtuous lover with the whitewash brush. Phil expostulated, but finally denied her soul and swore that she would love, honor and obey Mr. L'Esterre forever; and now the lover turns up. Oh, what fools girls are! If Mr. L'Esterre had been a gentleman and the aunt a woman of sense, they would have saved one woman from an everlasting heart-ache.

LETTER VII

King's Hotel, Halifax.

I HAVE not felt like writing, somehow, dear Vera. I am living in the past and wishing I could undo it.

I don't know why things went all wrong with my marriage. Colonel Gore made a perfect lover, but once we entered on the second month of our married existence, we fought. I forgot what about—something foolish. I was a fool; I didn't understand him, and I didn't try to. My Aunt Lydia, who has now cast me off completely, brought me up in the atmosphere of a prison. We were taught to smile and talk by rule, and I never would do that. Her daughters are models of propriety, and unmarried. We had too much to eat and too little exercise. I don't wonder women are throwing off those dreary homes where they are regarded as schoolgirls at thirty, and going out into the world to feel the wind of life in their faces, and to hear the stirring notes of action that make one's blood run quickly, as it never does in those middle-class houses behind the laurestinus bushes.

The woman who goes to work has my sympathy. The people who talk of England and her heroes appear to forget that the same blood runs in the veins of the women as in those of the men.

Well, Aunt Lydia sent me to balls on approval and lectured me on the desirability of marriage. She was shocked when I said marriage was like hanging—irrevocable—and when

the drop falls one enters either heaven or hell. All her friends lived the same life, and talked the same talk and labeled everyone neatly in the well-arranged cubby-hole they call their mind. I was labeled fast.

To the day of her death Aunt Lydia will never forgive me for not marrying Mr. Bernard, the diamond merchant, who lived in the big villa on the downs. He was very rich. His mother lived with him, and he informed me he would refurbish the drawing-room in the most expensive style for my benefit. When I again said "No," he inquired sadly if a European tour would be any inducement. Poor man! He would have clothed me with diamonds and still have been able to pay Worth for my clothes and to feed me with patties and champagne.

Aunt Lydia considered herself an excellent imitation of Providence; she pulled the strings, and we were supposed to dance to her pulling. I never yearned to wrestle with the dark things of life; I only wanted to work and live, and over and over again she refused to let me. I would have been a better woman (or a worse one) if I had been allowed to fight for myself and look inside the cupboards of Bluebeard. It is when one sees the dark corners, the loveless, dreary lives, which often are made loveless only through lack of opportunity, that a woman appreciates love, care and a man, as God and a woman have made him. I would have a woman cold or hot. Aunt Lydia thinks men are angels or gods, and that we poor women were created to smooth the way for them. Well, enough of women and Aunt Lydia. She breathed rapturously when she saw me in orange blossoms and knew that Colonel Gore would have to be responsible for my future.

He, poor man, was very good to me at first, but the man from Australia ("Appassionato Furioso") was so keenly, so wildly, so openly in love with me, anyone but Colonel Gore might have guessed that he was slightly off his head—he once had

sunstroke. No one minded him when he swore by all the gods that he loved me. One night (I laugh when I think of it) he came and rang our doorbell at two o'clock. The System rose and went down; he well might, for the electric bell rang as if someone were sitting on it, and as if the Day of Judgment were about to dawn. *There* stood the man from Australia, and insisted that it was morning, though dark. He swore he had just eaten his breakfast, demanded an interview with me, and generally behaved like a lunatic.

The System promptly lifted him by the loosest part of his clothing and deposited him in the street. Then he returned to me, to harangue me, to scold and to leave my room with scorn so intense that it was laughable. The fine emotions of rage and jealousy when a man is sitting in a frock-coat are worthy of admiration, but at 3 A.M., when he is wearing pajamas and a gray dressing-gown, they are ridiculous and do not seem real. When my irate lord strode up and down, his elegant draperies waving in the breeze of wrath that he created by his indignation, I giggled. It has always been my fate to do something flippant at the most solemn moments, so the System left me to reflection, which ended in sleep. I never believed he could be seriously annoyed or blame me for the idiocy of the man from Australia. Of course, I thought the System would have attributed the man's ardor to the quantity of champagne he had no doubt imbibed at some wild orgy. But the System did blame me for it all, and when we met at breakfast he was belligerent and I was illogical.

That was the beginning of the end, and Charlie was only the result of boredom, boredom so intense that nothing ended it except mischief.

And so I sold my soul for nothing! Oh, well, my System is a hard man and blind. I never saw the man from Australia again, but he wrote to me once, the wildest, maddest note you ever saw. Now I have drifted long enough in the past—it is of no

use to remember it; anyway, it is dead and buried, and, thank the saints, I can laugh at my misfortunes, and I belong to no man.

I have been to see Mrs. L'Esterre, who looks awful. Mr. Walters hovers round her like a worried hen.

I have just seen Colonel Gore walking with Miss Kitson. They were shopping together. Sir Anthony has sent a note asking if he may come to dine. Mr. Morgan is away.

Well, Sir Anthony came, and we spent a very cheerful evening, dined in the big room and drank champagne. After dinner we smoked. I felt bold and not afraid.

"Do you believe in love at fifty?" he asked.

"That depends on the woman," I answered, purposely misunderstanding him.

"Woman! I meant man."

I did not want to discourage him, but also I did not desire to have his heart laid at my feet, for I have not decided what to say. I believe I shall have to refuse him.

"Sir Anthony," I said, "I do believe in it. I believe in hate, too."

"In hate! Whom do you hate?"

I longed for a commonplace subject of conversation; this was too personal—too near my heart.

"To hate successfully," he continued, "one must have loved—" his voice trembled—"and then been hurt or scorned."

"I know but little of love or hate," I said, indifferently. "When are you going to have your tobogganing party?"

"You will promise not to toboggan with anyone but me?"

"I promise."

How gladly would I throw myself forever into his strong, kind arms, to be at peace, to be cared for, loved! Ah, me, I could not do it; the face that is close to mine when I shut my eyes is not Sir Anthony's, the arms that hold me till I feel faint with joy are not his, either.

Why are women taught that love and marriage are the only successful

finish to the maiden race? Love is so slight, it is not by any means a necessary adjunct to life; the work goes on while love drones by the wayside, forgotten in the hurry and scramble for success. I wish I had been born twenty years later. I wish that Providence—Aunt Lydia—had not had my training in her power. Her ideas are so petty, so feeble, and life is so big and men are so hard!

I wonder if many men know the inner life, the thoughts, of the women they have married. We, most of us, live two lives; but how many women want to know a man's thoughts? Women are brought up to consider a husband an amiable person who will flatter, who will work for them and give them all good things, but do many of them look on his heart as anything but a blank slate washed clean for them to write on it what they will? I wish I had known more. I was brought up to think of a husband as a sort of universal provider; that he would expect anything in return from my mind and my heart never entered my head.

I wish I had realized that a man loves a woman most when he says least, and that the love of a man, not of an effeminate fool, is a possession the angels might envy.

I was so glad to hear from you to-day! You say my letters amuse you vastly, and you long to embrace me and to see me happy again with Charlie; that I must build up my house again with the stones I have thrown down and start fresh with him. I will tell you his story some day. At present I am toiling on the road of pleasure. The waters of Lethe seem near me. My whole life now is Sir Anthony, and I hear from Mrs. L'Esterre that the announcement of his engagement to me is expected daily by the elect. She says that the maidens who hoped are despairing and that those who are just coming out are rejoicing, for they think I will make a cheerful hostess for them. I wonder.

I met Colonel Gore to-day. He stopped and said: "You are happy

here?" and then he walked down the street with a long stride that suggested the jingle of accoutrements and the leading of men. Mr. Morgan is expected home to-morrow.

The snow is very deep and hard and the air is so clear, so crisp it feels like champagne in my throat. I could die gladly in the soft drifts and sink into my last sleep, lulled by the Walker of the Snows.

Pringle's love affairs are progressing. I am glad she has found him at last. He is a gunner, but he can marry her soon. I am living very extravagantly. I have entertained half the town, and I am going to give a ball. Yes, I will go with the band while I have the money, and then ride in a school in New York or somewhere to train the ignorant how to sit on a horse.

Perhaps I may end in—well, no matter. For to-day I will not think or plan.

Yours ever,

GAY.

LETTER VIII

WOMEN are fools, my friend; all of them. You, toiling for fame and thinking you hear the far-off music of success under the noise of the tramp of the army of failures (perchance you only hear the shrieks of triumph when one falls out by the way), and I, because I have longed for love and tried to grasp it with one hand while I threw it away with the other.

Position and peace are the only things worth striving for. Utter selfishness is the best virtue for a woman. I think selfishness has masqueraded as Purity and Truth very often and kept the wolf of Despair from many doors.

I have laughed madly to-day and gone with the crowd. I have been dressed as a peasant and sold many useless garments and more useless ornaments at a bazaar.

The little priest at the church I told you about takes a priestly interest in my soul, and many an argument have we had on various topics. I am

a possible convert to him. He longs for my total conversion as the saints long for heaven or the soldiers for the Victoria Cross. *I* made the bazaar. *I* am a success. If I wear a bunch of red berries and my hair dressed as a geisha, they all copy me; if I walk in a light skirt and a dark coat, they all follow suit. I am the fashion, but it will soon be over, this game will. It was only a jest, after all. Hence my laughter.

This afternoon Colonel Gore and Miss Kitson managed the bran pie. They devoted more attention to conversation than to the pie, and I felt like screaming and saying to her: "Don't—don't trust him! He will take all you can give, he will take your soul and your name, and never fling one hand out to help you if you are in deadly peril."

Why do we give our hearts, we women, merely for that which is not love?

Mr. Morgan amuses me vastly. He is a queer youth, and waxes plaintive over my heartlessness, over my refusal to wear the red rosette.

I see Sir Anthony very often. He is growing very fond of me, but he does not inconveniently parade the fact. We meet often when I am riding, for I have bought a horse, and though they say it is very dangerous to ride on the snow, because one's mount might slip, yet it is so glorious I risk it. I don't mind the cold, though it is rather trying.

Sir Anthony talks of his loneliness and his love.

I told him I could not listen yet, and he said:

"You will soon; you will hear my story and judge for yourself. I could not tell you I love you if you did not know all about me."

His presence fills my soul with a peace that I never imagined attainable. Mr. Morgan asked me yesterday if the rumors about me and Sir Anthony were true, and I said:

"What are they?"

"That you are engaged."

I was feeling the old memories, the old regret in my soul, so I said:

"I shall never marry."

And he laughed.

He pretends to love me, but only pretends, for his tongue runs like the line off a reel when one has hooked a big fish, and he says too much, he has too many feelings, too many longings. So much have I learned.

Three Days After.

I have been out to the North West Arm—the name of the Abode of Bliss of the young married women with money—and stayed for three days. He—the System—was there, too—the irony of fate. How could I ever have imagined that I cared for him? Hard, cold, impassive, he never addressed one sentence to me, never seemed to see me when I came into the room, never took my empty teacup to be refilled, never opened the door for me once. Mr. Morgan did it all. Oh, that man, with his hard, tanned face, his dark-blue eyes and his impenetrable expression! Why doesn't he go and sit on the top of the Sphinx? I suppose he was annoyed that Mary Kitson was not staying there.

We all arrived in little bits, as it were. I went by train, and there was Colonel Gore on the platform. He said: "I was told to wait for you; the others have gone on." He carried my dressing-case and put Pringle into a sleigh. Then he drove me up to the house. He was quite conversational alone with me in the dark, but no sooner did we arrive than he grew as silent as a deaf mute. I tried so hard to be nice to him. I always do. I assume such an interested air and treat him as a new acquaintance. Why can't he pretend, too? All society is pretense. No one takes a real interest in the other woman's baby or clothes or toothache, and we talk all day of things we don't really care two straws about.

Why doesn't he stay at York Redoubt? And I once loved him!—loved his hard, burnt face, his dull blue eyes, the diagonal strip of white

on his forehead. (I have often kissed that line of white in the brown.) I loved the mark of the chin strap. Dear God! what a fool is a woman! How we imagine love and marriage and heaven!

Mr. Morgan tells me I am driving him to the devil by my indifference—I, who never drove or led a man anywhere. I told him he was only using me as an excuse, as a peg on which to hang the remorse of his misdeeds. How convenient it still is for men to say: "The woman tempted me!"

This house is immaculately beautiful. The walls are all covered with flowery papers, but there are no books, no cushions, no sofas and no coffee after dinner. I thought when I entered the hall that I should like to have a house all white paint and flowery papers, with chairs covered with chintz, but now I don't want it. Chintz is cold, and a house means a husband. Mrs. Goldsmith has been telling me with pride that she has no imagination. I think she lacks one of the great virtues an unhappy life has to bestow, for the happy people do not need to imagine; life plants its flowers at their feet and they pick them, but we have to imagine the joy that the flower of happiness could give us. The happy people miss some of the points of life; if they have no pain, do they ever feel the bliss of getting what they have waited for, longed for, prayed for? Am I writing all this to impress you or myself? Pain and sorrow may make one sympathetic or give one insight, but would I change those attributes for one week's joy? Ah, that I would, and not shrink from the pain that might come afterward.

"Happiness," said Mrs. L'Esterre, "belongs to the dull, to those who never long for the impossible."

And Mrs. Goldsmith said:

"A woman finds happiness in her position and her husband's—"

"—love," interrupted Mrs. L'Esterre, with a little joyless laugh.

"—income," continued Mrs. Goldsmith.

And we all sat silent.

"I have no husband and no income," I said, and then saw Colonel Gore behind me.

"Both can be supplied," said Mrs. Goldsmith, with the playfulness of an elephant.

"By whom?" asked the System, quietly, of me. Fancy telling one's former husband the name of his probable successor!

I was coming down stairs on my way to the drawing-room before dinner. My dull red velvet gown made my shoulders look like cream velvet. Mr. Morgan was slowly going down before me. You know how heavy a velvet gown is round one's feet, don't you? As I stepped down the stairs my little black shoes and open-work stockings were displayed. Mr. Morgan looked back and stopped; he turned round as I reached him, and stooping, gave my ankle a little quick pinch. The rustle of a woman's gown and the sound of a man's voice made me silent when I would have remonstrated. Below us I saw Colonel Gore and Mrs. L'Esterre; he was glaring at me. He had seen, and thought—what did he think?

"You brute!" I said, and Mr. Morgan's air of injured innocence would have done credit to a Saint Elizabeth.

Fortunately he did not take me in to dinner, and I never spoke one word to him all the evening. The System played billiards, while the rest of the company showed its ignorance of spelling by a game of letters.

I do hate being misunderstood, and I know Colonel Gore misunderstands me. I hate him, yet I—

Will Sir Anthony come to-morrow? We shall see. I am determined to let him tell me all, everything, in his heart. Most truthful men, when dis- coursing of that organ, could only re-cite a menu to be eaten when drinking the best champagne. Good-night. It is cold.

Thine,

GAY.

I shall accept Sir Anthony to-morrow.

LETTER IX

The Towers, North West Arm.

WHO says morning brings counsel? It doesn't. I resolutely make up my mind in the night and change it in the morning. It is a horrid time; the world is not warm, and breakfast and conversation are a bore. My last night's reflections seem silly, futile, I think of all the past, and it is horrid. I remember my rapidly dwindling money, and I don't want to marry Sir Anthony.

Oh, dear, if only I could breakfast in bed! That meal is responsible for more matrimonial quarrels than even a badly cooked dinner. Miss Kitson has arrived. I can't talk to her, she is so limp and her discourse so uninteresting. Colonel Gore and she want to play golf all day, and they abuse the snow for covering up the country. Dear snow, I love it. I was born in it, that's why. How hard it is to prevent one's self telling the things one ought not to tell! I am not a secretive person—few women are—but we can keep our own little mistakes to ourselves, though it is a bore to do so. Now, men are as deep as the sea—they never tell one anything true.

The same evening.

I have been tobogganing since dinner with Sir Anthony. There is a hill behind the house. It stretches to the sea, which is frozen, and the course is lighted with torches. The night was cold, but clear and still, and the rate at which one goes down the hill is tremendously fast and exhilarating. The sensation is numbing but glorious.

We went down two or three times and then sat on rugs at the top by a big pine tree.

Sir Anthony talked.

He told me he loved me, and I was silent with shame.

I feel as if someone had stolen my dearest possession from me, yet what I have lost I know not.

He talked for a long time.

He told me he married a woman when he was young, whom he loved madly. She loved him. Then they went to India and she ran away with another man. He tried to divorce her but was defeated. The defense pleaded connivance, which, by lies, was proved. She had a friend staying with her, a beautiful girl, who, as soon as Lady Erskine had gone with her lover, came to Sir Anthony and told him she loved him. He treated her offer with scorn, scorn so intense that she grew plaintive, beseeching, then like a fiend.

"I'll ruin you through her, and I believe you love her," she said.

And she did. She debased herself and swore that Sir Anthony was her lover, that Lady Erskine and her husband arranged it; and they all were ruined by one woman's lies.

Sir Anthony told it very slowly; he evidently had loved his wife.

"What happened to her?" I asked.

"She came back to me, begging me to upset the girl's evidence, to set her free to marry her lover, but—I couldn't; it was hopeless. No one could contradict. I won't say her name—that girl's. No one could be called as a witness except my wife and myself, and our testimony was no good, so she left me, and—and—she killed herself."

We sat in silence.

At last I said:

"I, too, have a story, a—"

"Never mind," he retorted. "I want you to spend your future with me. I don't care about your past. At the worst, you were only engaged to someone else."

I shall have to tell him.

"I can't tell you now," I stammered.

"I understand," he answered. Mrs. Goldsmith appeared and murmured "Supper." After the tragic conversation she seemed quite cheerful, and we both laughed.

"Women are fickle," said Colonel Gore behind me. He was speaking to Miss Kitson. Can he imagine her becoming anything so frivolous as fickle? He speedily conveyed her

away from my contaminating presence. No doubt he fears I may corrupt her virgin charms. After all, we are not so fickle as men are. I think a man is harder to understand than a woman. Men have more ballast and less impulse. I would follow the man I love through all torment; how few men love a woman well enough to stand by her side through anything! They let her go. And then the woman counts the cost and makes another man pay. That is the reason why, until the Judgment, we shall never cease trying to play the devil against the man, as Eve did.

My couch, my beauty sleep and the last new novel, purveyed by Sir Anthony, have great attractions for me. I will make a little beef tea; Pringle has a spirit lamp. It is a harmless drink, and it will warm me, for in truth I am cold and shivering, and my heart aches.

I think, when the angels relieve the guard, we shall get a little credit for the sins we haven't committed when the temptation has been almost too much for us. You will say I am guilty of the worst, perhaps, but you do not know the temptations to which I have not succumbed.

I can tell you this now because I can tell you all later on. I am going home to-day with Mrs. L'Esterre. She looks so pretty. I saw her last night after we had been tobogganing; she was near to me, standing in the dark by Mr. De la Bère. She looked absolutely happy and quite beautiful, but he did not come to supper with her. I wonder if they had arranged a meeting.

There are going to be proceedings, my dear. She is coming to stay with me at my hotel. I can hear you saying, "Don't have anything to do with her." Well, if I can teach one woman that a happy life is merely the possession of a good digestion and a bank account I shall have done well for once.

King's Hotel, Halifax.

The day after Christmas, 1 A.M.
Oh, Vera, how can I tell you—how

can I begin? Christmas is over. I hate dining with ghosts. We dined at the R.A. mess, and drank "Sweethearts and Wives." But that's all ordinary; that's only sentiment, and to-day I felt lonely and sad and miserable; it snowed and snowed, and no one came, not even Sir Anthony, who has influenza, so I sat and sewed and thought and smoked and almost wept. I told Pringle she could go to a sergents' ball with her beloved, and I dressed myself in tweed knickerbockers, long stockings and moccasins, a Norfolk jacket and a fur cap. I rolled up my hair and put on a short curly wig, light brown, and a light brown mustache. Where did I get all these luxuries? Never mind. Then I locked the door and put the key into my pocket, after looking with rapture at myself in the glass, for I have lovely hips and am so slight. I crept down the back stairs and stepped out into the night and the storm, feeling —*a man*.

The cold was pretty bad and the wind like whiplashes. The snow was thick and powdery and was drifting down the street, while the wind was whisking round the houses. I put on my snowshoes and tramped off. The streets were deserted, the electric lights out, and I walked and walked, loving the exertion, the whirling snow, the keen, deadly cuts of the wind.

Finally I grew tired, so I turned to come back, and I faced the full frenzy of the storm; but where was I? I didn't know which way I had come, nor which I should go. I struggled in the snow that whirled round me; my legs were so tired and my feet so heavy I could hardly crawl, and I began to feel sleepy, while some lovely music, the music of heaven, sounded clearly in my ears. And then I fainted and fell asleep, and the next thing I knew I was in a sleigh, and was being driven through a brightly lighted gate. Someone lifted me out and carried me into a room with a big fire and a very bright light.

"He'll be all right soon," said my

rescuer, in a sadly familiar voice, and I lay absolutely at peace and at rest.

Who had found me?

Someone gave me a cup of steaming hot coffee. I was half awake and half unconscious; happy, joyous dreams floated through my brain, but I can't tell them.

By-and-by I realized that someone was looking at me. I tried to sit up. There, staring at me, was Colonel Gore. *I was in his quarters, in barracks; he had rescued me!* I grew hot and cold with shame, for I was wearing man's clothes and he thought me a man—had he not spoken of me as he? How could I get away without betraying myself by my voice? Could I pretend to be deaf and dumb? I tried to rise; he did not speak; he came nearer; he had a photograph in his hand and gazed at it and at me. "For God's sake, tell me your name," he gasped. "You are—this—you are the scoundrel I have waited for. The suit you are wearing is identical with this, photographed by Detective Power." Here I fainted.

The best thing I could do! When I came to I lay in a pool of water; my wig was off—had he been shaking me? —and my mustache was gone. Had he been kissing me, or did I imagine that? He stood beside me like a judge about to assume the black cap and to decorate me with it.

"Gay!" he said.

And I wept, howled and sobbed, and murmured:

"I want to go home. Where is Pringle?"

"What are you doing in those clothes? Why are you dressed like a man?"

"I went for a walk. I was stifled. Woman's clothes are a nuisance in snow," I began, glibly. "I thought it would be all right. I thought no one would see me." I was growing incoherent. I gazed at my indecently exposed legs, and shame unutterable turned me purple with horror. I yearned for a skirt, for a rug, for a frill. I tell you that even a knitted antimacassar—any drapery thrown over me—would have filled me with

courage. I don't wonder that savages wear fringes.

"Let me go, oh, let me go!" I begged.

"I very nearly took you to the mess," he said, sepulchrally.

I laughed and laughed and cried.

"Don't, don't cry," he said. "You need not explain now—you are not fit to talk to-night. I will go to the hotel and get you a cloak—something to wear. I will order a sleigh and take you back. You are all right now; be happy and rest. How did you get out of the hotel without being seen? You must go in by the front door and be seen."

"Pringle has gone out. I have the key of my room," I gasped, meekly.

"Give it to me. I'll see the chambermaid and tell her you got wet in the snow. Don't cry—don't cry, Gay!" in a tone of anguish, no doubt well simulated.

The clock strikes two. I am cold and tired. I will tell you more tomorrow.

Yours ever and ever,
GAY.

LETTER X

I SAT alone in the funny little room with its queer furniture. The absence of anything frivolous struck me, and also there was not one photograph of a woman. I felt—well, awful—you can imagine that. I longed for the hotel, for my own room, and I thought of running away before he came back, but I abandoned that plan. How could I enter the King's Hotel arrayed in knickerbockers and face the servants in my own hair, without my wig, my mustache and my linen collar? For I had omitted nothing to make the picture complete.

There were two or three photographs of men lying about—hard, stern-faced men that he particularly affects, men who are as unyielding as stone. They think of soldiering always, and live their lives without any

frills, with lines of gold braid as their only joy. One frame was heavy. I touched it—there was a spring; it opened, and inside there were two photographs—an ingenious idea, no doubt invented by my System to save weight and room in packing. He is very keen on such details.

The two photographs were of me, one head and shoulders, one full length in my wedding-gown. I laughed when I saw them. When the full length one was taken Colonel Gore *would* hover so near me that half of him, just a shadowy outline, is visible beside my white gown.

I felt faint and weary and lay down on his sofa. To seek repose thereon would rapidly drive me to bed. It was hard, lumpy and slippery, a most uncomfortable resting place. Then I thumped the apologies for cushions, and—my heart stood still with fear, a horrible, awful numbness seized me. Above the noise of the wind and the rattle of the snow outside I heard a voice. It was Mr. Morgan's.

What would happen if he saw me there—in these clothes, at night, alone? What would Sir Anthony say and do when he heard of this mad escapade, this worse than mad freak of mine? Just then a vision of life's peaceful road in the character of Lady Erskine looked blissful to my lonely mind; it seemed to be my one ungratified longing.

"Colonel Gore has gone out, sir." It was Colonel Gore's servant speaking.

"Oh, well, I have an important message for him from the General. I will go in and wait," said Mr. Morgan.

I sought for a hiding place; there was none—not a cupboard, not a corner. Colonel Gore's bedroom! I rushed into it, sat down on his boots, and knocked my head against the wall. It was pitch dark. Then I crawled under the bed. There I lay—under the bed in a barrack room—giggling hysterically and shivering with nervousness and cold. Oh, that checked suit—how it had betrayed my confidence! To begin with, it was so

tight and so thin that the floor hurt my bones. Be thankful for the folds of a skirt; they do keep one's poor bones from becoming petrified and numb.

It was frightfully stuffy and uncomfortable under that bed. I would have given anything to have been able to put on a flannel petticoat.

I heard him stamping about in the other room. He said "Damn!" once or twice, and I nearly cried, "Hooray! I agree with you!" It made my misfortunes more bearable when I knew someone else was quite as uncomfortable. Then I heard him say, "By Jove!" I sat up and bumped my head, and the bed rattled. He opened the door. "No one here!" he muttered. "Miss Vandeleur, of all people!"

He had seen my photographs. I must have left the case open. I rolled about, stuffing my handkerchief into my mouth to keep from crying out.

I was having a nice time, and I had got myself into a pretty mess.

I heard Colonel Gore outside.

To my joy, his voice sounded horror stricken.

"Mr. Morgan waiting for me? What has become of the other gentleman?"

"I don't know, sir. I suppose he is there, too."

"And without his wig," murmured Colonel Gore, sadly.

I laughed then. Oh, if this little room had a door leading into anywhere, into a cellar, a garret! But it had one exit only.

"I'll leave this coat here," said the System, sharply. "You'd better go home now."

"Thank you, sir."

"How are you, Morgan," said the System, very austere. Ugh! how cold I was!

And then Mr. Morgan repeated his message, something about a march, an attack and guns and forts, while I lay and shivered.

The soothing smell of smoke was wafted to me. How I longed to smoke!

"What good photographs of Miss

Vandeleur," said Mr. Morgan; "private theatricals, I suppose, as she wears a wedding gown."

"Those are photographs of my wife, not of Miss Vandeleur," said the System, calmly, and his voice was hard and cold. I think his eyes must have looked pretty nasty.

"Oh, I didn't know. I beg your pardon."

"She is like Miss Vandeleur," the System continued, "but Miss Vandeleur's face is harder."

At last Mr. Morgan went, and I crawled out; dusty, disheveled and deadly cold, I staggered into the sitting-room.

"Why did you keep me so long? I have been under your bed!"

"Gay!" and he put his arm round me. I was tired and faint and ill. What a horrible situation to be in, and looking like that, too! To have been hiding under the bed of the man who divorced me! Oh, I felt a fool; but his arms were so strong, so tender! I looked like a shrinking little boy, and I suppose he felt sorry for me.

"Where's my coat?" I demanded at last.

"I brought it, and your hat. I managed most beautifully; and now you must have some hot coffee. I'll make it; I am awfully good at it," with quite the jovialness of youth. What a nice pal he makes when he is cheerful!

"I was worried to death about you," he said, "when my servant told me Morgan was here. I did not know what had become of you or where you were, and I didn't dare ask. And you were so uncomfortable, so cold, in my room!"

"Under your bed," I said, dolefully.

"Poor—" he was going to say a word beginning with a d, but he didn't; "poor soul," he substituted. He never said, as he certainly would have in the old days: "It was all your own fault."

We drank our coffee with a well-simulated gaiety, and then he told me that he had ordered a sleigh to be outside the barrack gates at eleven.

"I feel as if it were four o'clock in the morning," I remarked, feebly.

I put on the long cloak and the hat he had brought me and we drove slowly to the hotel. The roads were very bad—it had snowed so much—and our progress was slow. The chariot, a sort of glass coach on runners, tilted and wobbled and shook, and he put his arm round me—merely for my protection and comfort, he carefully informed me, in case I should fall and knock my face against the sides of the sleigh.

"I shall see you to-morrow," he remarked as we parted.

"Oh, you are not going to scold me?" I cried, involuntarily, forgetting the strained and unusual position we were in.

"No, of course not," hastily, "but I want to have one or two things cleared up."

I gave him my hand; he pressed it, and I went to my room.

Never in all my life was I so glad to see "home" again; and how I rejoiced Pringle was out! I took off my garments and buried them in the recesses of my locked private trunk. Then I drank some neat brandy and wrote half of this letter to you. I laugh now when I remember the situation and my cramped legs, but I think, of all terrifying positions, life without a skirt would be the worst possible.

I have just heard from Colonel Gore; he has had to go to York Redoubt, and will call on me on Sunday. This is only Wednesday. I am glad he is not coming and yet I am sorry. I'd like to get it over. Sir Anthony is much better; he is coming here this afternoon.

Well, he has been—Sir Anthony, I mean. He looks wan and white, and we had heavenly muffins for tea. I have trained the cook to do them. He urged me to say "Yes" and to consent to marry him at once.

I felt mean and small and despicable. Oh, what comfort a skirt lined with silk gives! If I had had on my

knickerbockers, I should have lain down and howled.

"I can't say anything until you know my story."

"I don't want to know it. I am tired of stories and tragedies, and I want you and love. You came like a nymph—" I was more like one last night, I thought—"from the sea, and I love you. If you honor me by giving me charge of your future, I shall be happy indeed," and so I said "Yes," and he kissed me, and I shuddered a little, but he liked it. I think in his heart he felt a little—well, I won't tell you my thoughts. You always tell me that I think the worst of everyone. He has lots of money, and I am going to be married soon, but he must know, before he takes the final fence, that I am a divorced woman; in fact, I will tell him the whole story, and now I will tell it to you, dear heart, as I have so often promised to do.

You know I was married young—most women are, I believe, who are "misunderstood" and whose marriage is a failure. But I really was twenty, and now I am nearly twenty-four. The man from Australia was the beginning. The night he rang out my happiness he rang in my divorce. Well, we lived in a flat, and the System was dull, morose, reproachful in look, taciturn at dinner, grumpy at breakfast; he took to staying out to lunch, though before he always came home to it.

Then I sought for mischief. I tried everything. I made myself cheap. I dressed to please him. I talked to please him—he was as numb as the Sphinx; and so I grew desperate and tried to find a devil to fight his devil, or rather to amuse the little devil in me.

Then I thought of Charlie. Before I married, we, my cousins and I, had adored a man named Charlie—just a silly schoolgirl's adoration for a man one never meets. I raked him out and displayed him in every way; but the best of it is, there never was any Charlie Woodward. He never existed. The rooms in Jermyn street were taken by me dressed up as

Charlie, and so—well, I'll explain tomorrow. You will say it can't be. It can, and so I'll tell you, *for it was*. Well, here's luck! Drink to the health of the future Lady Erskine.

Yours ever,

GAY.

I sha'n't tell Sir Anthony anything.

LETTER XI

MY DEAREST:

I am to relate my past now. Well, as you know, Colonel Gore got a good billet at the War Office and I got very dull. I tramped London. I saw the weirdest places and I had the weirdest adventures, until at last being a woman was so cumbersome to my development (I am quoting the new woman's jargon now), that I decided to be a man. Fortunately it was November and I am slight. How I could have carried out my design in long, light evenings with a fat figure, I know not. I sought a man's clothing establishment and asked for garments for private theatricals; they were all ready-made and all cut the same shape, and I grew wildly embarrassed when they suggested I should get into the garments to see if they fitted. I carried a suit off in triumph without trying it on, my face burning, and even my nose shining with reflected guilt. When I put it on I looked so nice, I really did, I was quite enraptured with my own appearance. I began to go out at night. I went to music halls and plays, and always got home unseen, unnoticed. At last it seemed to me that it was too dangerous to be going in and out of my husband's abode dressed in men's garments. He or the servants were bound to discover me and put a stop to it.

One dark afternoon, being especially venturesome, I wandered round Jermyn street. How lovely it is to be a boy! Nobody looks at a boy, while a woman is always stared at. I saw a label in a window, "Furnished Apartments to Let." The brilliant idea struck me that I would take them.

The housekeeper was fat and sus-

picious, but grew amiable when I paid a quarter's rent in advance. I dined there and went off to one of the big tailors in the Hampstead Road, where I bought a new suit, that checked one, knickerbockers this time—the first suit had trousers. For the next three months I had a glorious time of freedom, of seeing London. Alas! regardless of my doom, I played. I always drove to my chambers in Jermyn street dressed as a woman; it never occurred to me that I was watched, that the housekeeper imagined me a guest of Mr. Woodward, that a detective followed me there and followed me home. I left some of my garments in Charlie Woodward's bedroom, a powder puff and a bodice marked with my name. Twice I lost the latchkey of my chambers, so I went back to the flat dressed in my manly attire and sneaked in and up stairs without anyone seeing me, as I thought in my ignorance. Well, one morning Colonel Gore came in, his face looking gray and lined, his voice hard. He wasted no time in civil preliminaries.

"I have had you watched by a detective. I have found out all about your friendship with this Woodward. Your audacity in bringing him to your home is too scandalous for me to overlook. I might have forgiven the rest if you had refrained from that, this last insult to me. Now my evidence is complete. I have applied for a divorce. The housekeeper, the detective, all can bear witness. You had better see Mr. Woodward and get him to marry you as soon as possible. Have you nothing to say? No excuse? No—?"

I interrupted him.

"You left me alone. You cared nothing for me. I am young. I was lonely. I have no excuse to offer you."

"I loved you once," he said, slowly.

"Love! you don't know what it means! I am glad to be free," I said. "I shall leave here to-morrow."

And I did leave.

Charlie's landlady sighed for him in vain. He never went back to Jermyn street, and you know the rest.

I stayed in Porchester Terrace, and Colonel Gore divorced me. He moved heaven and earth to find Charlie Woodward, who was branded as coward, beast and villain—and he was only me!

At first I meant to tell, then it seemed a good way of getting rid of Colonel Gore. I knew I had done nothing wrong and that he was tired of me. You despise me. If he had seemed to believe in me, if he had—well, if he had been interested in me from the beginning. But he wasn't, so all is said.

Now that dream is over, those days done. I was always, he used to say, inclined to be flippant when I should have been serious. Now he is coming to see me. Well, let him come.

He has gone.

He—he is a hard man, and I like blue eyes. Sir Anthony's are brown.

How can I tell you our conversation? He inquired for my health, and then he said, suddenly:

"I believe we are not divorced."

As you know, my voice is never shrill; indeed, the man from Australia often called me his "golden-voiced one," but I was vehement now. It was shrill, and I said—I almost screamed:

"What?"

"May I take off my coat?"

He wore the heavy military coat trimmed with fur, for it was only twelve o'clock in the morning and he was in uniform. I always thought of him as a primitive man, who swore when he was angry and kissed a woman when he felt any of the impulses we call love; but evidently he has gained self-control.

"You said?"

"What I said does not matter. I want you to swear, by all you hold sacred, that Charlie Woodward exists; that you loved him or hated me."

Now I did not want him to know the truth. And I could not swear a lie.

"The past is dead," I remarked; "let it rest. You got your divorce. I am free."

"I have been studying that photograph ever since I found you in the snow. Of course, it is only a snapshot, but it looks more like a woman than a man."

I shrugged my shoulders.

"Your imagination is great."

He took the photograph out of his pocket. The horrible checked suit blazed at me.

"Are you not glad to be free?" I asked.

"Not at the price of your good name."

"You cannot pay for that now. 'The sins that you do by two and two, you must pay for by one and one.' No doubt I shall pay soon."

He rose and put on his coat.

"Can we not bury the past?" he asked.

"If you had said that before," I answered, "I would have loved you until death; but now I am cold, I am dead, I am free."

"Let us bury it together."

"No; you go your way and I will go mine. I killed my love and buried it at the cross-roads in a suicide's grave. Besides, how can a photograph of a checked suit whitewash a woman?"

"This one can."

Why had he been resigned in days of yore? A devil would have kept me; the resignation of a saint let me go.

He threw the photograph to me.

"Look at the wrist."

I glanced at it, at my own; there was a bangle—a twisted Canadian canoe; the light had caught it and it shone brightly. It had been given me by my father when I was little, and as it is very uncommon, I always wear it.

"There might be another bangle."

"Never," he answered. "You must have hated me, to hold your tongue so well. To face shame, loss of position, everything, just to get rid of a man. I can't understand it at all."

"How do you know I did not do it for love of a man?"

"I believe you did not—do not love anyone. I have watched you often when you have been talking. You are

good because you are cold. Most cold women value position, too," meditatively.

"Who would respect the virtue that is created by necessity?" I demanded.

He did not answer.

"Promise me that if you are in trouble I may help you, if you want anything I may get it for you."

"I am going to marry Sir Anthony."

"You are going to marry him?" incredulously. "Does he know the story?" eagerly.

"Not yet. I shall tell him. Of course, your name will not be mentioned."

"I don't care if it is. I shall take care of you whether you like it or not." And he departed, banging the door. He is human, anyway. He was quite different. I liked him much better.

Now to face Sir Anthony and the explanation. Poor little Past! How I have to dig you up from where you lie sleeping and dress you in emotions and motives! Well, Sir Anthony shall know the worst of me, and then he can take or leave me.

There has been a great deal of noise in the hotel this morning, luggage and boxes being carried up and down the stairs. The mail is in, and I wait for a letter from you. I am going for a walk in snowshoes down to the big pine woods, where the trees murmur and whisper, and where I can feel young and gay. I can't make the System out—his stern manner, his occasional lapses into desperate earnest. Is he lonely? Does he want his housekeeper back? No; for he can get Miss Kitson.

I came down to lunch, and as I passed through the hall from the bar, where most of the idle men congregate, I heard a voice—a rasping, jovial voice—that made my flesh shrivel as if alum had been poured over me. My dear Vera, it was the man from Australia!

What on earth has driven him here?

Yours ever,

GAY.

LETTER XII

SOUL OF MY SOUL:

I am terrified. I dare not move, except by the back stairs. I am afraid to go out in the daylight. I shiver when anyone knocks at my door. I have all my meals brought up to me, and I am sad and lonely.

To make it worse, Sir Anthony has gone away to Ottawa to see Lord Loftus.

I wonder what you will say when you get my letter about Charlie? Will you believe me or not? Can you imagine a woman, driven by desperation and hatred, clasping shame to her heart to be free? Perhaps you can't. Neither can I in the cool daylight of reflection, which shows up all the crow's-feet in my mind and tells me that I am not a semi-detached pirate, but only a woman who has no one to kiss her on the cheek for courage, no one to greet her when she comes home. You received my letter and you are nearing the top of the mountain, where fame stands—that cold, white woman with the burning lips. Well, the sting of life is regret, and, if I were brave, it would spur me on to work, to do something to help others; but I am made of chiffon, after all, and no doubt I shall vanish, when the crash comes, as those who have taken to the road—as I am supposed to have done—always do vanish.

But enough of my moralizing. A semi-detached pirate has no need of such a luxury. "Take and hold" is, or ought to be, my motto. Sir Anthony is on a good big liner, with electric light and music, and, most important of all, with a pilot. My little ship is nearing the rocks, and I doubt whether there will be room for me on that liner with the red velvet (sticky stuff it is, too) and the search-light. He doesn't know my history yet.

But from the future to the undivine present, which is "the man from Australia." I don't believe he can know that I am here; he may be doing a tour. If he once sees me or guesses I am within his reach he will

chase me, he will lay himself at my feet, he will do everything in his power to *make me marry him*. He considers himself merely a half circle without me. I am the other half, that he has yearned for since his youth. He is only flopping round the world; sliding, but never rolling, with his personality incomplete. How gaily he could roll on if my half-circle were linked to his! I can hear you laugh and say: "Don't be alarmed, he will have forgotten you! There is nothing so potent as the divorce court for blotting out a man's recollections."

You can argue as much as you like, I have a presentiment—and my sentiments never lie—that he is just as absurd, just as "*appassionato furioso*" as he ever was. Do you remember that ridiculous name I gave him? It is the direction for the emotions in singing one of my songs, and on the next page comes "*appassionato entusiasmo*." He will be singing his song according to those orders when he knows I am here.

Last night Sir Anthony returned. To-night he gives a dinner to introduce me as his future wife. Mr. Morgan has gone to kill moose with some youngster in the gunners. He won't be at the dinner. I have a heavenly gown, a satin that is white, that is dull pink, that is soft as pearls, shaded by pink chiffon; one shoulder-strap of blood-red chiffon on one arm and one strap of rubies across my shoulder make my skin like cream; a wee fichu thrown over my bodice of the same red, and a rosette to finish it, make my toilet complete. My skirt fits as if I had been poured into it, and it is very long and I am very slight. Thus arrayed, I start with the rosette of courage (is it not the same color as that of blood?) next my heart.

The dinner is over. It was a success; no one was surprised. Everyone drank my health and said nice things to me.

"Sir Anthony is infatuated," said Mrs. Goldsmith; "he looks at no one but you."

I stayed rather late. Anthony makes a good lover, and you will not be surprised to hear that I did not dig up my past. It is dirty work for an engaged woman to bother with earth in a grave. I am a coward; I am afraid of losing him. Once I jeered at the lives of those behind the lau- restinus bushes. I wish sometimes—at night and in the gray dawn, when my thoughts rush on me like a river—that I had always lived behind a bramble hedge.

I told Pringle not to sit up for me. She always leaves my spirit kettle and tray ready, so that I can make myself a cup of tea after I come in at night. If you don't let the tea stand too long it is the most soothing drink just before one gets into bed, without a book; with a book my eyes will never close.

I lighted the kettle, poked the fire and began to smoke. My gown of beauty was tight, and I went to my bedroom, where there was also a fire, to get a tea-gown.

There, in a big chair by the fire, a chair that I had bought for myself and which is specially comfortable, sat or reclined Howard Morgan! I was too much surprised to say a word. The clock struck one. Of course you will say: "You screamed, rang the bell and otherwise conducted yourself as a virtuous lady should." Not I. I wanted to know why he had come. I was wondering how I could get rid of him quietly, and fear—the fear of what he might know—gripped my heart and made me cold and tremulous.

"My lady of the red rosette!" he cried, and pointed to the badge on my gown. He threw his arms round me. I struggled—I did not dare scream. He tried to kiss my mouth, but I pushed him away and the kiss fell on my neck. His lips burned. He had been drinking. How could I get him out?

"I can wait," he said. "Surely the kisses of your bought red mouth will be sweet! I *will* buy you, for you have your price, just as sure as any and every woman has."

"How did you get here? How do you dare speak to me like that?"

"Dare!" and he laughed softly. "I dare anything for love."

"Love!" I retorted, forgetting the hour, forgetting everything except that there was going to be the hardest battle I had ever fought, and I'd die or win game. "Possession, you mean."

"It is all the same. What do men marry for? Possession. What do they love for? The same thing. Come; be reasonable. Listen to me. Sit down. I don't intend to go until you have heard me, and I mean to have the little talk now. I told you on the steamer I should come for it, so you may as well be quiet. You can scream yourself hoarse and be in the paper to-morrow just as well after I've said my say as before."

"You asked me to marry you on the steamer, and I refused."

"Pardon me," with a wave of his hand, "I said I loved you."

"Marriage and love go together."

"Very seldom. Marriage and the divorce court, love and a flat. There are isolated cases in life, of course, but they belong to the respectable and the suburbs, and I have not come here to talk of isolation, respectability and the suburbs, but of *you and me*."

"I am going to marry Sir Anthony."

"That is only a statement, which, I assure you, you will never carry out. I love you, and I mean to have you; besides, I am Sir Anthony's heir. Do you think I would allow him to marry at all? Do you think I will let him marry *you*—Colonel Gore's divorced wife? Never!"

For one moment I lost my courage. I nearly cried. Then I braced myself up. The worst blow I ever had imagined had fallen on me. *He knew*. Yet I was not surprised—I had expected it.

"You saw my portrait in the *Morning Scorcher*?"

The ridiculous and the sublime ever chase one another!

"I recognized you the moment you walked down the saloon on board the *Canadian*, but I was not absolutely

certain until I saw your photographs in Gore's rooms. If you will come with me to New York I will settle one thousand pounds a year—*pounds*, mind, not dollars—on you. I will love you until I tire of you, then you will have the money. Anyway, you won't be Lady Erskine; that would be like putting a racehorse into a cab. Not one word of your former history shall ever cross my lips. Say 'Yes' quickly. You're on the wrong side of the fence to refuse."

"With my past you have had nothing to do; with my future you will likewise have nothing to do. If I wanted to be the sort of woman you think me I should choose a better man than you are. I am meat for your masters."

His face grew red. I could see I had touched him on the quick.

"If you persist in your absurd refusal," he continued, "I shall tell all I know. I will hound you from hell to hell. You will soon spend all your money. You see I know all your affairs. Take me, give up Sir Anthony, and you will be happy; refuse me, and everyone shall know what you are. I will tell all Halifax. Choose quickly—ruin or love?"

"Ruin," I answered. I must have a little courage, Vera, somewhere.

"Now go," I added.

"Go? Not I."

I rushed out of the room. I heard a noise of men talking; surely someone would deliver me from this fiend. The corridor was lighted; I saw a door open, heard voices and sounds of revelry, and I met Colonel Gore!

I will tell you the rest to-morrow.

Yours always, Vera, lovingly and distractedly,

GAY.

LETTER XIII

WELL, Vera dear, to resume my thrilling narrative, do you feel as if you were in the front stalls in the Adelphi? I did not give Colonel Gore time to be offended, or frightened, or modest, or anything. I just dragged

him into my bedroom. He resisted slightly—"dragged" is a good word.

"Take him away," I said, and I pointed to Howard Morgan, who sat up, looking frightened, and murmured:

"I am going."

Colonel Gore's face was a study. He gripped Mr. Morgan by the shoulder and they marched to the door. They were more like prisoner and captive than two friends. By my sitting-room door they stopped, and Colonel Gore said:

"I have been dining with an old school friend; Morgan also has been dining; you may be quite sure he mistook your room for the—bar, shall I say, Morgan?—yes, for the bar."

And this extraordinary pair walked down the stairs together. They did not keep step, and Colonel Gore marched like a policeman leading an unwilling captive.

I have had my wish. I have played and am playing in drama, but I would that it were comedy. Besides, there is no applause. I am growing older, but I am not acquiring more sense—common sense, as it is erroneously called; it is most uncommon and is an inherited blessing, accompanied by an income. Rudeness and unpleasant candor are often mistaken for it.

It is terrible to be twenty-four, with a past, a heart and no money. Tell me something comforting when next you write, dearest, for my little ship is drifting away from the path of the liner and the black flag flies tremulously. I shall have to pull it down and substitute the red one for courage.

I have just been reading a book, by a woman, railing against matrimony. What a confounded fool!—excuse such strong language. Why don't women take liver pills when they begin to be discontented, or ride? I wonder if these disillusionized ladies ever realize how trying their husbands must find them. I fancy they never analyze a man's sentiments, though they waste enough time on their own.

I have learned to skate, to waltz, to dance the lancers. Think of it! The motion is perfectly glorious, the music

heavenly. We dance twice a week, and now are getting ready for the Carnival. That, my ignorant English-woman, consists of a fancy-dress ball on the ice. I am going as a poppy. You laugh. Poppies in Winter! My dress, from New York, which has cost a pretty penny, is made of velvet. I am a double poppy, and the bright red velvet is shaded and cut in petals up to my waist; it is made princesse, with the waist line plain; three petals form the bodice and one poppy crowns my "wood nymph hair"—I quote Sir Anthony. The dress is very short; shaded, soft frills of silk show when I waltz, and my stockings are pale green, also my boots. My hair hangs loose and curly—it is a triumph. My bank account is pretty low. The day of my departure draweth near, and soon I shall have to make tracks for some vast city to earn my bread.

I can see your face of horror; well, my dear, let me alone. I am making up for my dull youth, and a pirate is ever gay to-day—to-morrow may never dawn.

The System has just been here. We met with great amiability. He was somewhat nervous. I felt very grateful and showed it.

"Have you vanquished my enemy?" I inquired.

"I have muzzled him."

"How?" I asked.

"You may as well know. I happen to possess a little information about him. He is married. If Sir Anthony knew to whom, he would leave his money elsewhere."

"Am I safe?" I inquired.

"For a time, yes."

"I would not have asked your assistance," I said, "but you were the first man I saw, and I needed a man's strength to put him out."

"You needed a man strong enough to hold his tongue," he answered. "What would have been the result if you had summoned any man to your aid? He would have sworn secrecy, have confided in every man at the club the next evening, and all the women would have known, and probably have cut you, the morning after."

"Then I can trust you?"

"Absolutely."

"You don't ask what Mr. Morgan had come to say to me."

"I don't care to know. If you had liked his conversation, I suppose you would not have turned him out, and he would not have sworn so vilely."

Then he went away. How snubbed and small I felt after that plain hint that I can go my own way! He takes no interest in me. Why should he? asks my humble mind. He never did, answers my practical one. For a husband who has divorced his wife to continue to take an interest in her welfare is to proclaim him—what? An angel?

So I have time to enjoy my Carnival before Lent, to dance my few dances and hear a few more pretty speeches before the curtain comes down. To tell you the truth, I am not unhappy nor worried. I take each day as it comes, and the danger of discovery is rather intoxicating.

The man from Australia is still here. I wear a thick veil, and chance fate.

If a blow is coming, let it come.

We are going to practice the serpent march for the Carnival to-night. Mr. Walters is my partner; he skates beautifully. Mrs. L'Esterre leads us all, and whom do you suppose she is going to dance with? Mr. De la Bère. He is the hero of the driving tour episode. He is a French Canadian, and his grandmother was a squaw. That accounts for the Indian in him. He is strong and lithe, and she—well, she hardly looks at him, but people are beginning to talk about her. The women hate her; she is too cold, too indifferent, and they think her indifference is pretense. Her husband is a snake. What am I going to do about Sir Anthony? Cry to the housetops and the telephones that I am a divorced woman? Not yet, not yet.

Is it fair? Has the judge at the divorce court unmarried me? Bah! I will not reflect. When I take my room, my two pair back, and live on a pound a week, there will be time

for much reflection, and if I become Lady Erskine there will not be time for any. Either way, whatever is will be best. So much for my philosophy. I may do foolish things, but I am not going to be weak-minded enough to regret them. The woman that regrets always tells and makes others miserable.

Mrs. L'Esterre has come to stay with me, and we have been to many little pious teas in little pious houses. Nice little white houses with clean papers, and none to adventure, none to fight—just sitting down to wait for the Day of Judgment. If I lived that life I should have to run up and down and pretend to be a steam engine to create an excitement; waiting for the Judgment Day is dull work, and I should like to hear a few trumpets in life before I hear the last one of death. Now, if I had a house in the woods, miles away from everyone, that would appeal to my soul. Think of the possibilities of wolves and bears! Think of the glorious Summer, with the wind blowing over the swamp land and the Indian pears in blossom, the miles and miles of country over which one could wander and be lord! In Autumn here, in the long, still days, one feels lonely as the sun and the frost do battle for this mysterious land; then suddenly, the King, the Monarch whose horses are the North Wind and who marches with Fate and Time, crushes the Summer, and his vanguard paints the leaves scarlet, yellow and orange. They sing their death-song to the mad music of color, for is not color a song, just as much as music itself? I hope by this time you have ceased to apply the ordinary rules of life to me, that you are not shocked because of the copy book maxims I have outraged. Life is not a copy book.

Just here the System appeared. He has ceased to be conversational. He looked as if he had news of dire import.

"Did you know the man from Australia is here?" he asked.

"He hasn't seen me," I retorted.

"No, but he will. Now let me advise you to leave this place and go back to England."

I was thinking of doing this, but his suggesting it made me long to throw something at him, and I immediately decided to stay, to face everything, rather than take his advice.

"I have an aunt," he continued (I can imagine his aunt—at a distance, thank heaven!), "who would be glad to have you stay with her until you found something to do, and you would be out of the way of all trouble and—"

"I am not going away," I interrupted. "Why should I? I am going to marry Sir Anthony."

By the bye, I forgot to tell you that he comes every day to see me. He always says the same things—that he loves me, and I look charming. He is most amiable, his manner divine, his attentions unobtrusively offered; but, perhaps, if he were *worse*, if he were less charming, I might love him.

"I know," said Colonel Gore; "I know, but I would not risk that. Why won't you explain everything to me? Why do you refuse to clear up this mystery? *I am certain there was no Charlie.*" He whispered this, but it sounded in my ears like a shout.

"Sir Anthony Erskine," said the bellboy, throwing open the door with a flourish.

"Ah, Gore," said Sir Anthony, cheerfully, "how are you?" and he turned to me with an air of possession.

"Very well," I replied. "Colonel Gore is telling me to go and live quietly. He thinks the mad career of gaiety is too much for me."

Sir Anthony smiled.

"I hope soon to take you away," he said.

Did I hear the System murmur "Damn!" faintly?

"I must go now," he said. Then he turned to me. "You are quite sure, Miss Vandeleur, that you have no message for my aunt? I shall write to her to-day."

"I have no message," I said. "I have no use for aunts," playfully,

with a glance at Sir Anthony. "I shall soon have—"

"A husband," he interrupted.

"My modesty forbade my mentioning it," I replied, still playfully. Then the System said "Good-bye," and took my hand. His eyes suggested depression. He has very expressive eyes.

I followed him into the dreary hotel corridor.

"Why did you say such things?"

"What things?" he demanded.

Why do men never understand? They want their pictures in such lurid colors. Only a weak man really understands a woman's impulses, moods—call them by what name you like—and that man would never appeal to me.

"Good-bye," I said, cheerfully, and went back to Sir Anthony.

I shall marry him and never tell him the truth about myself. When he finds out—well, until the dawn of that day I shall be happy.

Thine,

GAY.

LETTER XIV

DEAREST VERA:

You are shocked, you are horrified. You are all things, and simply because of a postscript in which I said I meant to marry Sir Anthony. What you will be when you get my letter with the whole history of Charlie in it, I don't know. You have made the usual mistake, my dear, in taking me for what I said I am. You should never believe in the virtues that a man or a woman professes. If a woman says she is modest, you may be perfectly certain that she is a bold-faced jig, for, of course, we are none of us very intimate with our virtues, while our vices are our constant companions. And so you are annoyed with me because I once said, "A divorced woman who marries again is quite shameless." Forget what I said. I have forgotten everything. You say that there is only one man in the world I should marry, and his name you don't know. Even if I am heart-

broken by his cowardice, I am married to him, as you and all the others of your class agree. Well, you will get my letters, and you will wonder and think me perhaps worse, perhaps better. I made no defense when the System exhibited our want of unity to the world. How on earth did they get my photograph in the *Morning Scorchet*? I suppose some journalist stole it from my flat. I wish I were a good woman, for now I long to wipe off my past from life's slate. And yet I suppose if I had nothing to regret I should regret that. Now I am in the arena, and if the wild beasts tear me or if I get stained I can't help it. To keep one's garments white is almost an impossibility. Ah, Vera, I may be weak-minded, but I wish I had kept mine white.

Mrs. L'Esterre is staying with me. I am glad, for she is human, and I can't stand living with ghosts; when I am alone I see them. Mr. L'Esterre is also an attaché; he comes frequently; he is trying to construct a midnight passion for *me*. I call it midnight because—well, I leave that to your intelligence.

This is the night of my ball. I have been so busy about it! Sir Anthony's assistance with the invitations has been delightful, and he will help me to receive the guests. I sent the System a card, but, needless to say, he has refused my invitation. I had an awfully good time at the Carnival, and my dress was perfectly lovely—so becoming and so delightful to skate in.

Sir Anthony did not skate, but stood watching me. He loves me—there is no doubt about that; and I—well, I am fond of him, and if I keep that little corner of my mind shut up I can drift on pleasantly.

The only spectator there who made me feel unhappy was the man from Australia. I did not see him until the end of the serpent dance, and if he recognized me he did not show it. Probably he has forgotten me. Men always do forget. They are delightful philosophers when their passions are not strong.

Sir Anthony has got lovely family

jewels; he has sent for them for me, and my engagement ring is a blaze, just like the Northern Lights.

Mr. Morgan is evidently vanquished. He came here yesterday with some flowers from Sir Anthony. We met on neutral ground. I was very stiff and dignified and he most polite.

"I receive you as Sir Anthony's messenger," I said, when he was shown in.

"I have to apologize for my remarks the other night."

And I replied, "I shall forget them."

But I have not done with that man yet. I feel in my bones that he will appear again in a way I won't like. Perhaps I am unduly apprehensive; perhaps my liver is out of order.

After the Ball.

How delightful to be taken care of! The sun, moon and stars were at my feet, and Sir Anthony looked after me with all the assiduity of the new husband—why do they do their work better when they are unused to it?—and the tenderness of a lover.

I must say that once, dearest, my courage left me.

It was late, and I had shaken hands with the last arrival, feeling a weariness that made me glad I had decked myself with a china-pot complexion, for I did not look tired. Sir Anthony was by me, and we were talking of the prosaic subject of the color of the new furniture for the drawing-room.

"Darling," he said, for he grows loverlike sometimes, "choose your own color."

"Dull red, pink—no, blue," I answered.

"Little woman," fondly, "you can have it striped, if you like, as they do ice creams." I laughed and looked up.

"Would you mind, Anthony," with a pause before his name, "getting my smelling bottle from Pringle? She has it in the dressing-room."

He obeyed at once.

Thank goodness, my color was stationary. Coming in at the door, led by Mr. Morgan, and looking even

more "*appassionato furioso*" than usual, was the man from Australia.

"I think you have met Mr. Maul," said Howard Morgan.

How I hated him!

The man from Australia took my hand and said, softly:

"Are they cruel to you? I have come to rescue you from all this. I am your deliverer."

So this is his rôle. I nearly laughed. He is quite capable of carrying me off on a fire engine or of doing any mad thing to get possession of me. Why do not the authorities banish men who have had sunstroke to the uttermost parts of the earth? He looked so ridiculously amorous, so full of importance, yet so kind.

"Are you come in peace or in war?" I cried.

"In love," he answered.

That is much more dangerous than either, I know; still, he never surprises me, for I am aware what a firebrand he is. His emotions are absolutely ungovernable, his actions inspired by the devil—I am sure of it.

"I met Mr. Morgan at the club. I told him I was looking for you."

Looking for me! Worse and worse! At any moment the future autocrat of my destiny might return; and I would not introduce him to this past lover of mine. I must hear the worst. I said, calmly:

"I am very glad to see you. Come, take me to have an ice, to some quiet place where we can talk."

His eyes glowed with rapture, and we strolled down stairs, fortunately without meeting Anthony.

"How did you explain to Mr. Morgan your anxiety to find me? By what name did you call me?"

"Mrs. Gore. But," hastily, "I know you are not here as Mrs. Gore. I know you have thrown off that man's name, as you should have done long ago, brave darling that you are! I was talking to Mr. Morgan, and I said that if there is one man on God's earth that I hate—" here he clenched his teeth, as if he were a little dog growling—"that man is Colonel Gore."

"Have you mentioned the same thing to many people?" I asked, feeling that fate had dealt me its worst blow.

"Not to very many. Then, of course," cheerfully, "Morgan asked why I hated him, and I said, 'Because I love his wife, whom he divorced. Mrs. Gore is an angel, and should be in Paradise.' (I wish I were!) 'You see, I always talk and dream and think of you as my saint.'

Worse and worse. When a man glorifies a woman into a saint he always wants to put her into a shrine, that he may worship there alone.

"I thought," continued he, "that I saw you last night at the Carnival, and so I said, 'I thought I saw Mrs. Gore skating at the Carnival last night, but it must have been only a dream,' and Morgan said, 'Oh, dear, no. She was there.' Then I sprang to my feet and caught him by the collar, and said, 'What! tell me again?' All the men in the room sprang to their feet, and we had quite a scene," complacently, "for I think I nearly choked Morgan. Then that scoundrel Gore came in, and by that time I had let go Morgan's collar, so, of course, we had to be quiet, for Gore always hated me. Then Morgan whispered that you were giving a ball, and called yourself Miss Van-deleur now. No one heard him, I assure you. Your secret is safe with me. Did you know I was coming here? What luck that I came after you!"

Luck! Ye gods!

"I came away from England," I said, "to make a new life for myself, to forget all the past."

"You are engaged to be married to Sir Anthony Erskine?"

"Yes."

"Look here. Marry me. I love you. I forgot how madly until I saw you again. I would be so good to you! Oh, my dearest, my love, my——"

"I must go," I cried, hurriedly. "I must go back."

"When may I see you? Where shall we meet, alone? Let it be soon."

"Come to tea to-morrow," I murmured. "But if you betray me——!"

"Why should I? I love you."

And so we went back to the music. They were playing a *pas de quatre*. Sir Anthony was looking into vacancy.

I wonder into how many ears the man from Australia has poured the tale of his hopeless and hopeful passion.

"I won't drink any more to-night," he muttered, as my rightful owner offered me his arm.

"Don't," I whispered.

If he once becomes talkative he will ruin my life.

Good-night, dearest. You say I am weaving a novel. My adventures may be interesting to read of, but I am so tired of shocks. If it were not for what my System used to call my cursed pride I should go away from here. But why should I please him?

Thine, ever lovingly,
GAY.

What tune will the band of life play to-morrow, I wonder? Some dirge, I suppose.

LETTER XV

MY DEAR VERA:

I did not finish the account of the great ball—"great bawl" would be a better name, for I howled myself to sleep after it.

Well, when I returned to Sir Anthony he remarked, crossly:

"You were a long time talking to that fool of a man."

"Poor soul!" I answered, "he was hungry; he had not had any dinner, and I am hostess to-night."

"Pringle never brought your smelling salts," morosely.

"Never brought them!" I repeated, indignantly. (I knew she hadn't.)

"And she knows I never move without them," with crescendo indignation.

"She was very sorry," he remarked, in an absorbed way. Then:

"Tell me, Gay, what is there be-

tween you and that man? Maul, he calls himself."

"Space is between us now."

"Yes, yes, I know," with impatience, "but how does he know you? Where did you meet him?"

"At my Aunt Lydia's," I replied, "at home." She lives in Buckinghamshire; he will never meet her.

For once I told the truth.

"Oh," in a somewhat mollified tone, for "Aunt Lydia" sounds so respectable, as indeed she is. *I* am the disreputable member of the family.

"Tell me about your Aunt Lydia."

Then (without waiting for me to relate my relation's undated history, which fact rejoiced my soul—if I had announced that she is Mrs. Bracebridge, of Bracebridge Hall, he could soon have discovered the different points of my career) he continued:

"That wretched man looked at you."

"Anthony," I murmured, reproachfully, "why shouldn't he look at me?"

All men are alike. I have been through exactly the same process with the System. Why do they marry a pretty woman—for I am pretty—and expect other men not to look at her? What is the good of asking why? It is but vain.

My own private opinion is that most men like a wife who is no trouble to them. Matrimony is such a permanent arrangement, and it would be so wearying to be permanently jealous. The husband likes to feel he can leave his wife to sit in a railway station and no man will look at her; the lover wishes all men to admire his choice; but men should not marry an attractive woman—they should choose a worthy creature who never curls her hair and has no figure. They frequently do this—I will say that for them—else how is it that one sees such plain wives?

"Howard tells me," said Sir Anthony, "that this man is a company promoter, merely a swindler, who is trying to persuade silly women to believe in him. Don't invest any of

your money in anything he recommends."

I smiled. My money! How reassuring it is to know that no one will ever be able to waste that, for it is nearly all spent.

If it were not for the System telling me I had better leave here and go to his maiden aunt, I really think that I should depart, for I am getting tired of it all, and I know my life can never be as I should like. I can never drain delirium, so I may as well prepare for peace.

That fool!—the man from Australia!—how I wish he were at the bottom of the sea!—came up to me to say "good-night." He had, I am sure, drunk too much champagne, and Anthony was listening.

"I will call to-morrow," he whispered, in what he imagined was a soft, tender tone, but which was more like the growl of an irate terrier.

"Yes," I said, while the band was playing the "Mulligan Guards," for they were finishing up with lancers. That tune always makes me want to weep. It reminds me of a pillow fight, of a dark-brown face, of a wet day; it is like a red-hot iron on my heart. The league of the red rosette of courage has more members than we know. Across the room I could see Mrs. L'Esterre talking, with badly feigned polite interest, to Mr. De la Bère. How did all these bogies get invited to my party? I never asked Mr. De la Bère or the man from Australia.

"We will smoke and talk of the happy days of yore," cried my "deliverer," still growling.

Anthony offered me his arm and led me to the stairs. I could see he was annoyed.

The last guest had gone, and the rooms looked tawdry, though the decorations had been lovely. The Colonel of the Engineers managed them for me. Did I tell you he is one of my annexations? I always forget to mention these details—you see, I write you the truth. I can pour out my real self to you; to most women one has to say what one thinks

they think. Between you and me it has ever been heart to heart, my dearest. Have you not helped me when all the world passed me by? Have these other women no sins to repent of? Some of those I have met here think the Sunday morning repentance obviates any necessity for not seeing their lovers on Sunday night.

Meanwhile, Sir Anthony and his jealousy are waiting, and if you think a man's jealousy cools and grows flat like a soufflé, you have no experience. When Solomon said, "Jealousy is as cruel as the grave," he knew it could wait and grow more cruel in the waiting.

The only way to keep a man is to always act as if you loved him wildly. Let him be your god! fall at his feet when he is angry, kiss him (ugh, it's horrid!) when he scolds you. To tell you the truth, Sir Anthony's attitude toward me does not really agitate my mind. Why should it? I don't love him, and to thee, dear heart, to-night I can say I don't care whether I marry him or not. But I pretended to hear his counsels; in reality I was in the midst of a pillow fight, and a man had caught me in his arms and was carrying me down into the hall, kissing my hair, my neck, my lips, and someone was playing the "Mulligan Guards," while the hoarse voices rose in the chorus, "We shoulder arms, and march and march away."

I will tell you the story—indeed, I have almost told it, but Sir Anthony is still holding forth, and I believe to obey is better than to love, in the mind of the ordinary husband.

Well, he has finished his harangue, and my thoughts were interrupted by his last sentence.

"I really think, Gay, that you ought not to smoke. It is very nice of you to do so when *with me*."

How well I know men! How many have said: "Oh, it is all right when with me!"

"I understand," I retorted; "you may enter the stable, the others may not look over the wall."

"I did not say anything about a

stable; I was talking about smoking. When we are alone together it savors slightly of Bohemia; it is peaceful, and a woman who smokes does not talk too much, and—"

"Never mind, you old bear," I exclaimed, putting my arm round his neck—we were driving home, I forgot to tell you. "I shall always smoke, and you will always adore me."

For a wonder he said no more, and we parted, and I went up to my room. Tearing through my brain came my thoughts, galloping like horses, roaring like the sound of many waters.

The past, the present, the future, all paraded before me and made little mocking curtsies.

I rose unrefreshed, and after my bath arrayed myself in a tobogganing coat of bright scarlet. I must have color near me to-day or I shall weep. I met lots of people as I walked out to the tobogganing hill. They all congratulated me on the success of my ball. I had forgotten it. I am glad they liked it. To me it resembled the Day of Judgment and a visit to the dentist rolled into one. Anthony said he would come to lunch. He did not, but sent a wee note.

DEAREST:

Only important business could keep me away from you. I will come for some tea at five.

Yours, while

ANTHONY ERSKINE.

I wrote him a note and told him I was too weary to see him at five. "I am not fit for polite conversation," I said. At four o'clock in pranced "Appassionato Furioso."

He had assumed a saintly air, and looked subdued.

I was determined he should be humble, that I would trample on him and reduce him to pulp.

So I did not hold out my hand, and I said:

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself after last night."

He looked doleful; evidently he did not remember much and had gone to bed in a very cloudy state of mind.

"Once, long ago," I said, "you be-

haved like an idiot and made Colonel Gore so angry with me that he—well, that is how the trouble began; and now you appear again, behaving vilely and saying odious things. For heaven's sake, say what you have to say *and go!*"

"I won't. I am your deliverer. I shall stay."

"Then you ruin my life. Sir Anthony—"

"Surely he knows?"

"Of course, of course," hastily. "He is jealous."

"Of me?" joyfully, "of me?"

"Not of you, of my past."

"I love you, and I won't go away. I am sure you will need help some day, and then I shall be here."

He is infatuated, illogical and all the rest. Here Pringle interrupted us with tea, and then a call boy came to say Sir Anthony was waiting to know how I was. I will tell you the rest to-morrow.

Yours, a very depressed and weary
GAY.

LETTER XVI

DEAREST:

You should have seen his face, the man from Australia, when the message was brought in. "You told him you were ill—not to come—for my sake? I shall certainly never go away until you are married!" triumphantly.

Verily I had turned on the "*appassionato entusiasmo*" label now.

"Naturally," I said, "he has more sense than you have. He knows that I should be exhausted after last night, and— Oh!" to the bellboy, "tell Sir Anthony I am resting and feel much better."

I followed him to the head of the stairs and heard him deliver my message.

"Miss Vandeleur is resting, sir, and feels much better." Then, by way of encouraging him, the little fiend added: "Mr. Maul is with her, sir, having tea."

I rushed back to my room and gazed at Sir Anthony as he drove off. His

sleigh was a high one, and I could see his face under his fur cap; it looked set and very stern. The sooner my death-warrant is signed the better.

"What did the boy tell him?—my message, I hope. I gave him a dollar to tell everyone who came to-day that I am having tea with you. Tea alone with Mr. Maul—everyone left out—what a gorgeous circus!"

"Do you know," I added, calmly, "that I think you had better go? I have nothing sharp here, or I would certainly kill you, and—"

"Don't talk in that tone!" he begged. "You *can't* hate me, you *can't!* I am here to shield you from everything," plaintively.

"Colonel Gore," announced the devil's own agent, that little call-boy.

The System looked—well, rather wild, and he ignored "*Appassionato Furioso*," who murmured, "My God! the husband!"

"I was passing and I heard the bell-boy give Sir Anthony Erskine a queer message from you, so I told him I knew there was a mistake, and came up to tell you. I frightened that boy out of his wits first."

My "deliverer" departed, after shaking my hand ardently, and left me alone with Colonel Gore, who sat down, ate two pieces of cake, and remarked:

"I hear you looked beautiful last night. Everyone praised your ball; the floor, the music and the champagne were all above reproach."

"They played the 'Mulligan Guards.'"

He actually started.

"That was strange. Do you remember how loud Mr. Murphy would sing? And I carried you down the hall. I think you look thinner than you did."

"I am—thinner."

"I hope you will be happy with Sir Anthony."

"Will you have some more tea?" I was glad to flourish the teapot. It was a great relief to me.

"Thank you, yes; but it is a great risk."

"What! tea?" holding the teapot in

my hand and gazing at him. He has a funny little way of flashing his eyes at one as if somebody turned the light on. "It is not a risk," I remarked. "It is good tea, and it won't hurt you. Your nerves are all right?" anxiously. "I hope you wear warm jerseys!"

"I meant a great risk for you to marry Sir Anthony. He is a very just man. My nerves are all right, but his relatives are rather narrow, and they are regular ferrets for finding and displaying the rats of anyone's past."

"Rats in the past—" I repeated.

"I wish," he added, warmly, "that you would take my advice and go back to England. I should be able to think of you cared for and at peace."

"Are you going to be married?"

He looked surprised.

"They say so here—to Miss Kitson," I added.

"If she will honor me, I suppose I shall marry her. Why did you come here? Why have I seen you again?"

"What harm have I done?" I inquired, innocently. "You should greet me as your benefactress, as—I did not know you were here."

"That is all right."

"Well, don't begin to sling stones at me; don't ask why I came or why I do anything. I shall soon go somewhere, that is certain as death."

"Do you love Sir Anthony?"

"Love? That is out of fashion; it is not worn. It will probably be used as a decoration in the twenty-first century, as a nice little medal to hang on one's coat."

"Good-bye," he said, stiffly.

I always show him my worst side. I scoffed at love, and I long for it.

In walked Anthony.

I hate everyone.

Of course, Colonel Gore left us. Engaged mortals are always left in seclusion, but Anthony's love-making is like Christmas-card pictures of polite ladies and gentlemen, whose attitudes are arranged with a due regard to picturesqueness and the audience.

I felt tired with so many shocks in one day, but there was no time to meditate, and only the prospect of my

lonely future on nothing a week kept me from telling Anthony to go away.

We had some fresh tea, and he said:

"Are you better, dearest?"

"Yes," I answered, not knowing whether to explain or to deny anything until he gave me a lead.

"Gore tells me that Mr. Maul wants to marry you."

I laughed.

"A whirlwind would be more reliable as a husband than Mr. Maul. A few men have wanted to marry me," modestly. I can fence, but I can't repent or explain.

Something seemed to have pleased Anthony. Probably he had been worried about some business arrangement or a letter from the War Office, and his wrath was merely expressed in his countenance. Men are made that way.

So I curled myself up on the sofa and we talked prettily. He will never win my heart, but he does not want to. Yet how kind he is! I wonder if he and I shall get on when we are married? He said at last:

"Gore is a good chap, one of the best. I hope he may be lucky now. You know he divorced his wife."

"I have heard it mentioned."

"Yes, poor chap. I believe she was a charming girl. No one could understand it. Evidently someone gayer and younger than Gore appealed to her."

"Really!"

"Women are queer, Gay. Even you—you are impulsive. You take likes and dislikes suddenly, and you are a wee bit of a flirt, you know you are," gaily yet reproachfully.

"I don't trust a woman who can't flirt," I answered, hurrying him off the uncertain ground.

"Before marriage," he suggested.

"And after," I announced. He might just as well hear my opinions.

"You men live your lives as you have carved them; we women are supposed to live ours according to the man whose name we take; marriage is but a dull feast if a woman doesn't realize that to keep her lover she must turn him into her friend, her pal—"

"Whence all this worldly wisdom?" he asked. "Don't make a mistake; a young man may like a pal, but a man of my years wants a pretty woman in a tea-gown."

So much for my theories, Vera. I seem always to acquire them too late. I shall probably make my life with Anthony into a hash by living up to the ideas my experience with my three years' System planted in my soul. How wearing it must be to be a piano that's let on hire, to be played by light hands, by heavy hands, to racket with young subalterns and sing the moonlight sonata softly!

One should love with one's head, never with one's heart. Had I known this I should never be where I am now, by the suicide's grave at the cross-roads. The four roads lead whither? I fear me the path of happiness is a lonely mountain-top with a rough, water-swept pathway leading thereto. How uncomfortable it is not to have FATE, in large letters, to rail against! I myself am responsible for everything. The day Colonel Gore told me his decision, instead of quietly accepting it as I did, and packing my boxes with the philosophy and deliberation of the man from the piano emporium, who locks the piano and removes the candlesticks with calmness and forethought, I should have screamed and wept.

I forgot whether I told you that the System said the one thing that impressed the fact of my guilt on his mind was the deliberate manner in which I left his house; that I packed all my belongings, all my personal property; that I even called him in to decide whether he or I owned the silver candlesticks on my little table with a calmness that seemed a confession. If I had thrown off my wedding ring and left his house in a cloak, with a bundle of hair pins and no tooth brush, he would have believed in my innocence and virtue. It was the only occasion in my life when I acted with deliberation, and my deliberation was wasted; my forethought impressed him as heartlessness. If I had raved, ranted, stormed,

I should still be in his house. What a fool I have been! Never mind, I will be petulant, silly, childish, vain with Sir Anthony. I will display all the wilfulness and varying moods he expects from a woman. The woman who makes plans and lets a man know them is always left to fight the battle of life alone. The weeping creature who cries at a look and has hysterics at a word is the character to assume nowadays. For men are tired of women who plan and succeed, and I should think the women would be tired of it, too. Marriage is the best profession for a woman. I shall have a class for girls, to teach them wise maxims for the marriage state.

Anthony left me early after a little more courtly love-making. I will tell you about the "Mulligan Guards" and girls' maxims.

Yours with love, dear,
GAY.

Oh, the joys of the road! I am really happy, for I don't care for anyone.

LETTER XVII

VERA DEAR:

The heartache the "Mulligan Guards" gave me has vanished; it was merely nerve-ache. How often the two are mistaken! Well, you must know that in the old days, before those wolves, Tragedy and Suspicion, entered our abode, the System used to be fond of having lots of his subalterns at the house, and I must say they seemed to like to come. One wet Saturday, a dull, wet day, when the rain was soaking and the wind high, five of them arrived, and we played games. We played every absurd game that ever was invented, and finally ended in pillow fighting. When it was over, and, disheveled and laughing, they all tore down stairs, they played the "Mulligan Guards," and sang it—*roared* it explains their method of song better—and that is all; it was only nerve-ache, or toothache, or something that

made me feel what seemed like the torment of memory.

My maxims for young girls interest me muchly. I have been making them up all day. No one would send girls to me to be trained for the married state, would they?

These maxims are constructed for the very newly married, before they have learned wisdom by snubbing.

I would tell them never to mistake a man for a god.

Never imagine slights; men don't hint, they hit hard when they are angry.

Be happy in yourself. A man is not always thinking of you. When he looks cross, don't flatter yourself it is because your nose looks red, or that he fears you do not love him; probably something has gone wrong with his work, and he will tell you when he feels like it. Don't ask too many questions, and never say, "I told you so." Always dress well. Take more trouble for your husband than for your lover; a husband lasts until death, a lover is easily lost.

Remember that a man does not always want to kiss you; never at an exciting moment when he is very much interested in anything. A man leads a much more dual life than a woman; he is two people. We forget that, and want him to live for love only. When he wants kisses let him have them, but stop him, leave him before he has had too many; he can have too much of you, little as you think so. And this I would say to the woman who loves with her head as well as her heart—be two different beings with your husband—his mistress and his friend; be different in each capacity, then he won't tire of you. Don't mix up the parts—that would spoil both; stage them differently.

How do you like my teaching? Isn't it sensible?

I should be a success as a trainer of young married women if I could bury the divorce court.

Mrs. L'Esterre is the greatest joy to me. She plays divinely, and in her music I drift out on the streams

of dreamland and am happy. I love Wagner—he wears such big emotions. You will no doubt consider my criticisms of music are somewhat like a description of gowns; never mind, I trust to your understanding.

Hooray! That odious but for once blessed little boy has just brought me your letter. Oh, dear, dear Vera, how delightful it is to hear from you! What a lovely letter you write! I had lighted all my shaded lamps to give an air of jovialness to my mind, but I don't need pink shades now I hear from you. But oh! oh! oh! Vera! I am wrong, I am wicked. I have deceived everyone, and I am not really divorced at all. Your wisdom is wonderful, but I am quite sure you are wrong. You say that the only thing that annuls a marriage is taking another man in the place of one's lawful husband, and as I did not do that I am not free to marry again. Surely the judge can divorce me if he likes; he has the power. Here is my point of view: Because they believe me guilty, I am guilty. You know that no one in heaven or on earth would believe my story. If I had tried to prove there was no Charlie Woodward, could I have done it? I believe it would have been quite impossible. It is all over, and I have to face life as best I can. I am sorry I told you the truth. I am free, Colonel Gore is free and about to console himself with Miss Kitson.

In spite of your lecture, dearest, how I long for you! I am weary for the sound of your voice. If I were a man I should love you wildly. I always think your lips are so beautiful, so red and curved, and I like your blue eyes and dark hair. I wish I were a poet. I should write you a sonnet.

Four Days After.

Mrs. L'Esterre has been so ill! Oh, dearest, I have not had five minutes for *anything* and no time for a pen. He—the husband—has my supreme contempt. He is still calm, as cruel as a cat, and so indifferent! But no matter; I am going with her to New York

to-morrow. Anthony and I are to be married very quietly when I come back.

Colonel Gore is engaged to Miss Kitson; the fine family has overcome its scruples at last. Well, may his soul rest in peace. That sounds as if I were hanging him or condemning him, but I am not. I preached a nice little funeral sermon to myself last night, and it is all over now. I have put up a little white tombstone to him in my mind, and on it is written—well, I won't tell you what I wrote.

Mrs. L'Esterre and I are going to see Dr. Hervey—I must try and be coherent—to get his opinion on her case. It is her heart, and I believe she won't live. But to see her! she is so pretty; she has lost the terrified look and is so gay that we laugh all day. He is surprised, but is not emotional.

But, you wretch, Vera! oh, you awfulest of friends! why did you do it?

I had just put Mrs. L'Esterre (Phil, I call her—her name is too long to write) to bed, and I was feeling like Captain O'Neil in a tea-gown:

From sword-belt set free and released
from the steel,
The peace of the Lord was with Captain
O'Neil.

The fire was good, my cigarettes perfect. I suppose soon I shall have to buy cheap ones, like those the little London boys smoke on the tops of omnibuses. "Sweet sixteens," they are called, but "diabolical nineties" would be a better name.

Well, to resume, in walked Colonel Gore, heralded by a little boy. Now, if they had proper men servants at this hotel, surely they would know that 10:30 P.M. is not the time for a man to call on an undefended lady, especially when she is "Captain O'Neiling" it. Why didn't that fool of a boy first bring up his name?

The System had just come from mess, and looked as smart as they make 'em in scarlet and gold. He is well built and so straight, but so hard. I would rather be his friend than his enemy.

I think I guessed why he had come, for he looked a little nervous.

If his eyes only had a little more of the devil in them, I should fall instantly in love with them, or rather him; but a woman can't love a saint, because she always knows what he is going to do. A saint lives up to one law, a real woman to none; that is why we are so attractive.

I am writing in bed and have just upset the ink bottle; isn't it sickening? What an anti-climax, to spill ink on the sheets in the midst of an exciting relation of an exciting situation.

He appeared worried, for, as I tried to rise elegantly, he strode across the room and took my hand, saying:

"I have had a letter from Vera; read it."

And I read your note.
How could you do it?

DEAR COLONEL GORE:

Make Gay tell you all about Charlie Woodward. I think she may now. If she refuses, I will.

Yours sincerely,
VERA LESTER.

"Make!" I repeated; "make!"

"I know I can't make you," he said, humbly, "but you will tell me *all*, won't you?"

I heard a noise in Mrs. L'Esterre's room.

"We leave here to-morrow, early," I said, "and probably shall be away for two or three weeks. Will you possess your soul in patience for that short space of time? It is rather late now," with hesitation, "for an explanation."

I wish he had been masterful! If he had insisted on my telling him!

"I will be patient," he answered. He can be, too; he could wait calmly for the Day of Judgment.

"You promise to tell me *everything*?"

I nodded.

I felt weary, yet peaceful. I wished he would go, yet I longed for him to stay forever. I wish he had taken me in his arms and kissed me. I would not have told him to be patient then. I wonder why he wants to know more; it is not for love of me.

Probably it is some idea of justice, of truth. Why didn't he have that idea before?

I wonder now, as I sit by the fire writing to you, if a man ever wants the whole love of a woman's heart. Does a man love one woman, or is each one of many? If I loved a man I should remember every word he had ever said to me, every look he had given me, and each day in the year I should keep as a joyful or a sad festival, according to whether we had been happy *together* or lonely and apart.

Sometimes I think that men's love is merely fancy; they have many fancies. When they think, do the women they have fancied pass before their eyes in a long varied procession? One was dark and one was fair, one was a beauty, one was amusing.

I think Colonel Gore's motto must be: "Red lips tarnish the scabbarded steel—High hopes faint on a warm hearthstone—He travels the fastest who travels alone."

Here I am, wasting time by reflection; it would be much more to the point if I thought of my bank account, which is dwindling.

I told you that Anthony and I are to be married as soon as I come back. I love the idea of being taken care of, but somehow I don't love him. That will come, for I am tired and I feel old.

S.S. *Halifax*.
At Sea.

Here we are, dear, on our way. How I am enjoying the sea! As we crept down Halifax harbor I gazed with rapture at the snow-covered land, and there were big blocks of ice floating about. The sea was so blue and the land so white! much more like heaven than the golden floor idea. What was the Norseman's legend of heaven? I know not. I have just dined, and Phil is better. I am feeling as if she were my baby, and Pringle and I guard her carefully.

We had a great send-off. Mr. L'Esterre was there, as calm as fate.

He is not agitating himself about his wife. Anthony presented me with flowers, all white ones; I don't like them, they look so white, like Death, as if we had parted forever.

"*Appassionato Furioso*" arrived too late to say good-bye. Just as we were leaving the wharf he tore down. His air of sorrow was lovely, and he waved his handkerchief in a way suggestive of much desire for conversation and more bad temper.

Well, I will go to bed now, wishing you were in New York and that I were going to you.

The stars are gorgeous. I sit and count them on deck. You in your smoky city never see the sky-jewels as we do here; the colors that flash in this Northern sky are the colors of triumph and despair.

Yours ever,

GAY.

LETTER XVIII

MY DEAR VERA:

Whom do you suppose followed us here?—"Appassionato Furioso." We have been treating him with scorn and indifference, but he wanders round us with flowers, and gazes at me like a hungry little terrier looking for a lost buried treasure bone.

He sought a solitary interview with me. It is always well to listen to one's lovers and one's enemies. I may as well know the next card he intends to play. He begged, he besought me, to marry him. Vera, he cried, he really did.

I was kind to him, but I told him the truth—that I mean to marry Sir Anthony—and I said: "You must forget me."

He glared at me and then ran away, literally ran. There will be trouble, my dear.

To-day I had a letter from Colonel Gore. He says he writes only to remind me of my promise. I was rather anxious to see how he would begin it—"Dear" what? But there was no beginning, no "Dear," just:

"Be sure you do not forget your

promise." And he ended, "With best wishes,

"Yours sincerely,

"R. H. GORE."

With best wishes! That sounds like a Christmas card. What does he mean?

I met Howard Morgan in the hall to-day. He said he had come to New York to hear a little music and go to a few operas. He invited Phil and me to dine with him and go to "Lohengrin," but I refused. I will not pretend to be civil to him, though I know that I shall spoil the game by declaring war so soon. He is only muzzled, after all, and dogs can growl through a muzzle.

I have just had a letter from "*Appassionato Furioso*," asking me to allow him to call and say good-bye. I wish it were good-bye. I should feel happy if I believed it, but fear grips my soul that he has some trump card he means to play.

I dressed myself in scarlet; I would face him bravely.

Mrs. L'Esterre went out with Pringle, to give me the sitting-room to myself. The man from Australia entered, followed by Howard Morgan.

"Surely," I said, "you can say what you mean without mixing up Mr. Morgan with it?"

"No; I want him to hear it."

He could not intend to carry on an affectionate conversation with a witness, so I resigned myself to fate.

"I hate that pharaasical fool Gore," cried "*Appassionato Furioso*." "I won't let you marry Sir Anthony Erskine."

Can you imagine the pantomimic gesture in which he indulged? Before I could reply, Howard Morgan said:

"You can squash that, Maul, very easily. You were the co-respondent."

"I was not." "*Appassionato Furioso*" can be very emphatic when he likes. "I wish I had been."

"Well, you can *say* you were."

"How?"

"Just say it!" shouted Mr. Morgan. "Who can contradict you?"

"She can. Miss Vandeleur can."

"Who will believe her? Would anyone believe you, Miss Vandeleur?"

"Everyone would," said the man from Australia.

"No one," contradicted Howard Morgan. "Try it and see. Ask her what she thinks."

I did not answer. It was an impossible question to answer—a diabolical situation to be in. Like a flash it dawned on me they had me in their power, that they had concocted this plot. In the eyes of all the world I was done for. Howard Morgan would have no mercy, and the man from Australia would be an easily used tool, especially as their plan would enable him (as he, no doubt, thought) to attain his heart's desire.

I sat thinking. My lips felt dry and parched, and my heart sank. I saw all that I must lose pass before me, before the eyes of my mind, like the slides of a magic lantern.

My voice was husky as I said:

"I will never marry you. I would rather die."

By the way, it is harder to live than to die.

Neither of them took any notice of my protest.

"She will marry you, then. She will be thundering lucky to get you," said Mr. Morgan. "Now, Miss Vandeleur, Maul will make you awfully happy. I shall tell my respected uncle, Sir Anthony, the glorious news of your death and resurrection—I mean of your divorce and marriage. What a lark! Old Gore, too, shall hear the tidings from me. I wish I had a kodak—I'd photograph them both. One never has what one wants at the moment," sadly.

"You would be awfully happy with me," said "*Appassionato Furioso*."

I laughed and said:

"Why are you both in New York?"

"I came to see you—I followed you," said the man from Australia, meekly.

"I came to meet a lady," said Mr. Morgan.

"Well, I want you both to make me a promise. You are quite determined to tell this vile lie about me?"

"Quite," said Howard Morgan, and "*Appassionato Furioso*" fidgeted and muttered: "Yes."

"Wait until I get back to Halifax before you do it."

For, dearest, I have hopes of the System; he will never believe it, I feel sure.

"Your nice little plan will be more dramatic if I am there, when you play your last, most dishonorable card; but Mrs. L'Esterre is very ill, and I cannot leave her yet."

"I say," said Mr. Morgan.

"Will you both promise?" I demanded.

"Certainly," said "*Appassionato Furioso*."

"Of course," said Mr. Morgan; "but wouldn't it be easier, better, for you to wait here for him?" nodding in the direction of my adorer, whose expression did credit to his much-vaunted affection.

I laughed.

"I prefer to be in Halifax," I said.

"If you could face the divorce court you could face anything," murmured Mr. Morgan.

"I wonder what you think of yourselves?" I asked. "You are honorable gentlemen!" The scorn that I felt broke loose, but it had no effect on them.

"When I arrive at the King's Hotel I will let you both know. Then you can do your worst."

I left them.

"We'll drink your health!" cried Mr. Morgan, while that lunatic from Australia grinned feebly.

It is my one chance, Vera, my one chance.

It is days, weeks, since I have written, dearest. Black death and despair have been my portion, and I am alone.

Phil, dear little Phil, is dead. We arrived here in comfort, we lived in simplicity. I went with Phil to the specialist, Dr. Hervey, and he said a lot; he talked like a mill-stream, and

so I—like a fool—derived comfort from his conversation. I might have known doctors talk most of trivialities when they really can do nothing. We drove every day, and she seemed to be better. I read to her—such funny books. I love to think of them now—adventures, stories, miles of Kipling. Oh, how I love Kipling!—not personally, dearest. The days passed like whirlwinds in doing nothing, but we were so happy! Mr. L'Esterre did not come, and Anthony wrote every day. Phil took her medicine with divine regularity, and we went to a few concerts. But gradually she seemed weaker, duller, more resigned to lie on a sofa. I saw the doctor—it seemed to me it was time for us to be going back to Halifax, I for my wedding and she to rejoin her husband; besides, money was running away, and she certainly was better and out of pain. The hotel was expensive—everything in New York is expensive. Do you know, it all terrifies me. I feel afraid of the great city Demon that walks abroad like a big serpent at night. How shall I feel when I fall into its clutches—when, with no money and no friends, I bow before it to beg its favor? Bah! I shall never marry Anthony.

So I sallied forth to see the doctor, and I found him alone. He is very abrupt and he doesn't like me, I fancy; anyway, he thinks me tinsel. So I am. You can't warm tinsel, either; it is cold and shines and is all sham.

I told him we were going home, and I added that Mrs. L'Esterre had lost the terrible pain that was so unbearable when first we came. He smiled.

"Yes," he answered. "She will never feel that pain again."

"You are sure of the effects of your prescription?" I asked.

"A greater physician than I am has written her a prescription," he answered. "If I could counteract the effects of His touch I should be a magician."

I felt queer and cold.

"What do you mean? When may we pack and go home?"

I felt a yearning for my funny little rooms at the King's Hotel, for the sound of the sleigh bells and even for that bellboy.

"Mrs. L'Esterre will probably not live longer than two weeks, if as long," he said.

I felt a hand at my heart, the most terrible, clutching pain. I don't know what I said, I don't know what I did. That doesn't matter.

He gave me some sal volatile and put me into a cab, and I drove off.

There's no snow here; it doubtless is gone in Halifax now. I went round and round the city, just seeing the awful faces of the women—world-wearied, life-wearied women! At last I went back, and I was gay, quite gay, and she never suspected where I had been. I had to write to her husband for more money. I told him to come at once.

He answered my letter and said he felt sure I was worrying myself unnecessarily about his dear wife, that we had spent too much money and we had better find a cheaper hotel. He said my wild letter amused him and I could send him a telegram if she grew worse. He finished by adding that he believed two ladies of such boundless experience as his wife and myself could never need the assistance of a mere man—a husband—unskilled in doctoring, nursing and affairs of the heart. What did he mean? Has Mr. Morgan talked?

Well, she grew weaker, weaker. First she lay on the sofa and gave up her drive, then she stayed in bed for half the day, then all day. I felt my heart was breaking. She did not suffer, and Dr. Hervey said she would not.

The hardest road I ever traveled was keeping her amused, while I wanted to cry, to howl.

Her money was all spent; thank heaven, I had some left. "To move her would finish her in an hour," the doctor said.

At last she realized she was dying.

"How long have I to live?" she asked Dr. Hervey one day, just as I might ask Pringle, when she calls me, if the day is fine or wet.

"A few days," he answered.

"Literally only a few days?"

"I think so," gently.

"How comforting!" she said.

"Now I shall begin to be happy. Gay, telegraph to Claude; he is in Montreal."

My dear, Mr. De la Bère came that night, and she got up and walked.

She said to me when I was helping her:

"If I thought I was getting strong, Gay, I should feel awful, but now I know that only the joy of the end makes me strong, and I shall see Claude."

She dined with him that night. I left them alone. If you could have seen her face and his! Both of them looked so absolutely happy and not a bit awkward.

A tragedy usually makes a man awkward; but he just loved her.

That night Pringle and I put her to bed, and she slept a little. I thought her better, and I stayed in the sitting-room talking to Mr. De la Bère. Phil had told him so much about me, and I had done nothing, nothing. Oh, God! I wish she were back.

Well, she called me, and I sent for Dr. Hervey. Mr. De la Bère held her in his arms.

"It is heaven," she said, "heaven at last. Oh, Claude, the strong arm of the man I love! *To die is gain.*"

Dr. Hervey came, but soon left. He could not shut the gates of Death.

At four o'clock I was called out to see Mr. L'Esterre. I was surprised, for I had forgotten all about him.

"Dr. Hervey sent for me," he said.

Then he saw Mr. De la Bère, but Death is a gentleman and brings peace in his train.

"For heaven's sake, leave them alone," I said. "She will never speak again." And she never did.

I left Claude De la Bère alone with his dead and went to find the husband. He said things that I won't write. Then I sent Mr. De la Bère away.

Of the funeral, of the days of horror and blackness, I can't tell you. I want her back, I miss her so much, my gay, loving little Phil. I am

numb and cold. He, the husband, is gone. I don't know where Claude De la Bère is. I have written to him to tell him about her grave.

Oh, what a game is Life! I envied Phil with all my soul.

Well, now I have paid our bill—he never offered to do it. Pringle and I leave to-morrow.

Will the bells toll or ring for me in Halifax?

Thine ever,
GAY.

LETTER XIX

King's Hotel, Halifax.

MY BEST BELOVED:

I feel as if death and desolation had overtaken me. I came back last night.

My rooms are full of flowers. Anthony sent them. I feel very grateful.

Mrs. Goldsmith has just been here.

"My goodness! you do look a wreck!" she said, candidly. No doubt that remark was inspired by common sense.

"One does not usually return from a deathbed looking cheerful," I retorted.

"No, oh no, but Mrs. L'Esterre was nothing to you. You can't care. There must be some other reason," and she prattled on.

"Mr. L'Esterre says he saw you with Mr. Maul, that queer, odious, foreign-looking man—he is English, I believe."

"Did he?"

"Now do tell me about Mrs. L'Esterre. Didn't you have an awful scene with her when she knew she was dying? Is it true that she went and stayed at another hotel with Mr. De la Bère and that he and the husband had a terrible encounter?"

"Not one word of it is true," I answered. "Can't gossip let the dead rest?"

For once I was grateful to Mr. Morgan, for in he walked. He discoursed of many things, and at last he said:

"I got your note. I have done what I agreed to do."

"Then we have declared war," I remarked.

"Yes. I wish you looked more fit to fight," he made answer.

"Are you afraid of my breaking down? Your anxiety for my health is touching."

"I am not afraid."

Then Mrs. Goldsmith left, convoyed by Mr. Morgan.

I could have torn that woman to pieces for her hateful insinuations, her vile mind. I wish to-day that I were dead. I believe that wish is supposed to be a sentimental solace. Well, I have to face ruin now, and I am anxious, so anxious, to see what the System—Dick Gore—will do.

Do you know, dearest, in my little heart of hearts I think that he will horsewhip "*Appassionato Furioso*" and Mr. Morgan. That he will come here—that— Oh, well, what a fool I shall feel if he does not come!

The days are all blank.

The paper this morning in the society notes has its heading in large, extra large, type:

SCANDAL IN SMART SOCIETY.

COLONEL GORE'S DIVORCED WIFE MASQUERADING AS AN UNMARRIED WOMAN.

It is all up now.

Here is Sir Anthony's carriage. Branches of flowers and a note from him.

MY DEAR GAY:

I hear from Howard Morgan that you are Gore's divorced wife. In spite of that, I would marry you to-morrow except that Mr. Maul, whom I have always detested, acknowledges his guilt and his ignoble conduct in not appearing before. In the face of his much earlier and superior claim to your possession, I must reluctantly resign mine.

Yours truly,

ANTHONY ERSKINE.

Then I began to feel numb.

Anthony believed it, and yet I knew he would; but did everyone else?

I have been out shopping. Every man I knew stopped and shook hands with me, every woman cut me. The club windows were full of men who

watched me go by; one of them kissed his hand to me. I met Mr. L'Esterre and I cut him—for once I was first in the field.

But, dear Vera, I cannot understand where Colonel Gore is. Why does he not deny all these stories? He knows that Mr. Maul was not Charlie; he *must know it*. You know I promised to tell him everything when I came back from New York. I am waiting for him, and I will tell him the truth. Surely he won't, he *can't believe* what Howard Morgan says. That I could give up all things for "*Appassionato Furioso*"—he *can't believe that!*

Vera, he does! My God! he does! He has gone away. This is the note I have had from him:

I am glad that "Charlie Woodward" has turned up at last. I suppose you will be married at once. My congratulations! I am going away.

Yours,
R. H. GORE.

His congratulations!

The manager has just been up to say he wants my rooms for someone else.

"You can have them by to-morrow," I answered.

Pringle has come to say her gunner wishes her to become his wife in a week. I suppose he is afraid of my contaminating influence upon her.

I said:

"You can marry to-morrow."

There is a concert to-night at the Orpheus Club.

I shall go. I will die game, whatever the people may say.

"*Appassionato Furioso*" came in.

"Don't talk to me!" I said. "Take me out to dine. Give me some champagne; take me to the concert to-night."

He always was good about feeding one. I am sure he dates his emotions by the kind of soup and the brand of champagne he drinks.

"You are either very good or very bad," he retorted. "Jove! I don't know which appeals to me the most. But you look too ill; can't you rouge or drink, or *something?*"

"I'll be all right," I said.

I put on my dull pink gown and my jewels—I haven't pawned them yet—and we dined.

I could not eat because of my weeping, but I was exquisitely painted.

"You look sixteen," said "*Appassionato Furioso*."

He tried to be *entusiasmo*, but I could not jest with the king of the revels to-night. I felt numb and cold, and I was running on my courage. I would face it all.

When we walked up to our seats the house rustled like the wind in the aspen trees. I don't know what the music was that we marched to. Afterward someone sang "As Once in May," and the band played the Walküren Ritt magnificently. Oh, the shriek of the Walküren! I felt cold water running over me, and as if they had taken out my heart and were playing on its strings.

I did not see one face clearly; all was a blur. No doubt I knew everyone, and the day before yesterday they had all been my dearest friends, but now I did not see them, though they stared at me.

At last it was over. Escorted by "*Appassionato Furioso*," I drove to my hotel.

His conversation had consisted chiefly of "By Jove!" at intervals.

"You looked a queen," he said, humbly, when we parted at the principal entrance of the hotel.

You will say my last appearance was in the worst taste imaginable, that I am everything that is heartless, detestable. Dear heart, I know it. I should have spent the evening in prayer and fasting instead of flaunting myself before the eyes of outraged society. I know all you would say. I am made that way. I am not repentant or retiring.

Do men know nothing? They never give us a hand to help us up. Never, do I say, never? They always believe the worst of a woman, and find extenuating circumstances for a man in the fact of his being simply a man.

Who do you suppose has just been

here? Miss Kitson. She must have had great difficulty in getting in. I know even the servants, whom I have tipped royally, look on me as pitch, defiled, outcast.

We talked. She looks kind. I did not feel embarrassed. Miss Kitson's countenance is full of shy amiability.

"I fear you are lonely," she said. "You are going away?"

"Yes. I don't want anyone to know when I am going."

"Are you happy?" she asked, anxiously. "I have so often wanted to know how a woman feels when she has broken her word, her vows—" she stopped.

Wasn't it funny for her to take off the mask of civility? Well, the ball is over, and everyone knows I have been masquerading.

"Why should I tell you anything about myself?" I asked.

"Perhaps it is you that he loves yet." What an idea! A woman's idea.

I laughed a little. It was so silly—so futile. The Past and the Present sitting side by side, wondering about the feelings, the impulses of a man.

To feign the madness of happiness is an easier portion than to show one's heart in its rawness, to be chastised by scorpions.

"I came to tell you," she said, "not to be *hard*—don't let it make you hard. Marry Mr. Maul and—oh, do marry him!"

She laid her hand on my arm, and her eyes were beseeching. Her sorrow was not for me, but for herself.

"Why do you want me to marry him?"

"Because I am afraid of you—Colonel Gore—"

Jealousy, I suppose, afflicts her. Poor soul! she will outgrow it.

"I am going away," I said, slowly. "I shall never see you or Colonel Gore again; you need not be afraid of me. Besides, he loves you and despises me; if a man once despises a woman he can never love her again. To despise is worse than to hate; the one is nearly related to love, the other is as far from it as indifference—no, farther."

I don't know why I talked to her. I really was thinking aloud.

"Isn't he right to despise you?" she asked.

"Right? Really, I have packing to do," I answered, "and—"

"You want me to go; well, good-bye. Thank you for seeing me. Is there nothing I can do for you? He asked me to help you if I could."

That spoiled it, and I got rid of her before I scratched her face or pulled her hair; my revengeful impulses are always absurd ones. She is a good girl, and will marry Colonel Gore and be placidly happy forevermore, as a good girl should be, and he will respect her. (It is cold—respect, I mean).

She thinks she loves him, but she doesn't; she has fallen in love with the notion of his loving her. Women often do that. The man becomes an idea to worship. You know we (I class myself among the fools—they do more harm than sinners; but enough said) never think that marriage is merely life, that it is not a dance and champagne. How will that man's mind answer my mind? we never ask. How will my mind answer his?—of that we never think.

Marriage means breakfasts and long evenings; it means dulness, unless a woman and a man are friends. There is no band, as there is at the restaurants, where we dine with the lover. How shall we like him when it is quiet and we are slowly passing life's milestones? Bah! I grow long-winded and as dull as the man from Australia when he talks of his feelings.

I have packed my clothes, and I leave here to-morrow.

First, I have to say farewell to my "deliverer," as he calls himself. He deserves it. An everlasting farewell; would God I had never seen him!

The lights are going out, the play is over and the pirate flies the black flag again. It is cold and dreary; the fog bank and the icebergs are not cheerful, the sea of life looks gray and angry, and I have to face the music of despair. Well, I have faced it before.

The Next Day.

I go to New York to-night, but no one knows this.

“Appassionato Furioso” has just left me. Vera, he wept, he howled; he sees his folly now as I see mine.

He arrived this morning at eleven o’clock, flowers in his hand and a gardenia in his buttonhole. I used to love gardenias; now they savor of death and despair.

He looked somewhat nervous.

I looked awful—haggard and ugly and yellow.

We talked about Colonel Gore, and then he said, with an attempt at jauntiness:

“Well, when are you going to marry me?”

“Going to marry you?” I repeated. “Why should I?”

“Well, it is usual to marry the correspondent,” uneasily.

“You never were that,” I answered.

“No, but I shall be your husband, which is better.”

“When we began this jest,” I remarked, “you surely did not expect me to carry it through to the bitter end?”

“There will be no bitter end, Gay; only life and hope and love with me.”

“I want you to understand from to-day I have done with you. You have done me the worst injury a man can do a woman.”

“Gay! I have not. Besides, you let me. You agreed to it, you knew my plan, you knew——”

“Could I have prevented your plan? Could I have foiled you and Mr. Morgan in any way if I had tried?”

“No,” triumphantly, “for I was determined if I could not have you that no other man should.”

“Exactly,” I replied; “so now no other man will have me, nor shall you. Go—go away forever. I’ll dree my weird alone.”

He raved, he ranted, he wept, but at last he realized that I meant it, that I would *never* marry him; and he has gone, with a little fear of God in his

soul, repentant; and I am alone—alone—alone, for always, with a dead heart, a black flag and no courage. I have drained the cup to the dregs.

Thine,
GAY.

Do not be surprised if you hear nothing of me for a long time. I am tired. I do not repent.

LETTER XX

Nowhere, is My Address.

MY BELOVED VERA:

Six weeks it is since I have written to thee, oh, my beloved! “Drink to the men that were broken!” Dear-est, that’s me.

It is not for want of thought of thee that I have not written. At first I could not. I had a bruised, stunned feeling; my brain was made of wool. I believed that a man has two faces, “one to face the world with and one to show a woman when he loves her;” and the bold pirate thought she had reached the port of missing ships and would never have to take to the main again. I built my heart’s house on the sands of belief, forgetting that a man accepts facts, as he sees them, as the law and the prophets, and explanations are to him naught. But mind, I don’t blame him.

All this is a mystery to you! Well, let it be. It is buried and over, and I am working, working. You laugh. I don’t mind ridicule, and I know, if you laugh, it is only you.

I left Halifax in the night, unknown and unnoticed. No one played a funeral march for my little hopes. I traveled to New York and took ship in a slow old tramp steamer. Good-bye to liners, electric lights and velvet chairs. Then I went to bed and stayed there for the whole voyage.

I need not enlarge on my adven-tures since I reached Liverpool. Pennies became as valuable as sovereigns and note-paper an unknown luxury.

I tried everything. Men are not pleasant when one is alone in a big

city and possesses a good figure; but as I expected soon to pawn all my clothes and go out draped in house flannel, it did not seem to matter. The only two occupations I did not endeavor to essay were those of a charwoman and a player of a drum in an orchestra. Both need strong arms, and I am pretty thin. On the whole, I have enjoyed myself. My two pair back was my own. I cooked unholy concoctions that, formerly, would have laid me low for a week; but being hungry, really hungry, they did not affect me at all.

I love the wilderness, and I only felt frightened sometimes. I am a little lonely, but I have courage and I sleep well.

At last, one night, feeling a mad yearning for air, I got on a tram and spent one of my black sovereigns (so precious are my pennies!) to go to the river.

What did I mean to do there? I don't know.

We drove through noisy slums. The tram was full of evil-smelling beings whose clothes were dirty. They gradually got out, and the horses crawled on through the gloom.

Two men and I were the sole occupants of the proud eminence—the top of the tram. We all looked mouldy. The horses were tired, for the night was very hot. A thick, murky fog fell on us, and the whole universe seemed to contain nothing except death. To die would have been like lifting the curtain of the fog and seeing behind it. I listened idly to the men's conversation.

"She'll never ride again," said one; "we're ruined without her."

"Damn her!" said man number two. "How was it she fell?"

"I don't know. Well, 'the first young woman that can ride,' is my motto. They are all cowards."

I turned round and said:

"Do you want someone that can ride? Try me. I want work."

My pride I left on the Atlantic Ocean. I may as well mention that fact.

"Where have you ridden?" said

one, who I found out afterward was the master of the circus ring.

"In Canada."

"Can you come now and show us what you can do?"

"Yes," I said.

We stopped the tram. We got off and walked down a road, at the end of which were rain-dulled merry-go-rounds and drink-dulled men.

A big tent was lighted badly.

"The performance begins at eight," said my guide; "but we have no lady rider."

Well, dearest, they put me on a horse, an old circus ambler.

"You must come up to-morrow morning and be trained," said the ringmaster. "Your name?"

"Miss Hughes." Vandeleur would not be safe.

"Your salary? We'll settle that in the morning."

"Have I to go through hoops and jumps?" I asked; "because I don't know how."

"No; we want a lady rider."

So I went back next day and practiced. The horse knew his work—he waltzed and lay down dead, and we went through the regular circus performance. I had only to sit still. It was warm weather, and we traveled all over the country. I hated the noise, the jeering crowd, the evil-smelling lights, but I loved Time, my horse. The ringmaster, Mr. Trevelyan (Smith, I suppose, is his real name) was a decent sort, and the others—well, there are about twenty, the dregs of the earth. My groom, Barty, was an officer in the Dragoons and the clown was a clergyman.

Barty is as hard as nails and as thin as a post, but tall, rather good-looking and absolutely uninterested in everyone and everything.

If I wanted to be dominated by a man, I'd like one to shake me, to love me, to hold me—aye, to beat me; and I'd follow him through the whole world; but to be tolerated! I know, for I have been that, merely tolerated, as is a chair or a table. I took my own road searching for life's music, and heard only the dead march.

I have had to give up frills and laces, and my habit is very plain, but scarlet, bright scarlet. You would laugh if you could see me on my horse careering round the ring, the band braying, the feathers in my impossible hat waving and the people cheering. The applause is pretty bad, but my horse makes a bow—I don't.

Well, write to me: Miss Hughes, Post-office, Vere Street, London, W. I'll get the letters. There is no need for you to know where I am. My society is too choice, and we play in such awful places. You would be shocked if you could see the men who haunt our exits and our entrances. The comments of the crowd are more audible than polite. One man I heard say of me, the other night:

"I wonder who is her lover. A pretty woman of her type needn't be lonely. The ringmaster runs after her all day."

Such are the comments, my dear; but I wonder why it is supposed that a pretty woman can never be a proper person? It seems to me that the plain woman would be more like the ripe cherry and fall into a man's mouth. Has not a pretty woman wooers by the score, while the plain woman naturally desires to keep the one man who offers her any worship? Write me a letter, think of me leniently, and pray for the soul of

GAY.

A Week After.

I sent you a letter yesterday, to-day I am adrift again. The affection of the ringmaster overcame his prudence, and the Canadian Queen of the Arena (that's me—would you recognize the description?) is dwelling in a little room, with five shillings to pay every week for rent and two pounds in her pocket. Sole stock in trade, one very mouldy black gown and a scarlet habit, which she is keeping, as she had to buy it herself. I shall construct my lonely and frugal lunch of one toasted tea-cake and a cup of cocoa. I don't drink tea now (it does not stay by me long enough), and my cocoa

costs me sixpence a week. It's the stodgy kind, made with a pennyworth of milk. I find the diet filling but not exhilarating, useful but not clever.

We had a royal row, the ringmaster and I, finished by a push from me that sent him flying. Naturally, such an exit caused him to return in war with my money and the remark that the sooner I left him the better.

My groom has gone; he came into some money and has gone into the Midlands to start a stable, with the hope of getting some men to put up their hunters in the new emporium. Can one keep hunters in an emporium? I know not; I leave the word to your mercy.

Here I wandered out to take the air, for I felt chilly, though it is Summer. Better a good walk than a red nose. I met Barty, the groom—Captain Wilde now, if you please—with five or six hundred pounds capital and a stable full of horses in the Midlands.

He is just the same, just as dull and as queer. He wants me to help him. He is on the edge of a hunting centre, and is starting a riding-school to train the ladies to ride whose papas have made fortunes in oil and cotton and leather. Here is where I come in. I am to ride with them, I am to hunt—joy of joys! I will be an advertisement, and at first I am to have thirty shillings a week and a percentage on all the horses I sell. Wasn't there a book called "A Pretty Little Horse-Breaker—or Trainer?"—that's me, dear Vera. I am off now to Mudshire with an empty portmanteau and a heart (hearts are only worn on long chains now)—mind, I should say—full of hope. The less one digs at one's feelings the better; they don't grow up so strong and green when neglected; if one waters them with tears every day they sap the vitality of the woman who works.

Green Cottage, Mudshire.

Well, here I am. The stables are round the corner. I possess a sitting-

room with a piano in it! Verily, the millennium is about to dawn. I suspect Captain Wilde in that piano; not that he is hidden there—the notes and strings forbid—but I think he got it for me. Now I shall be able to play the "Mulligan Guards" and go out on the past with them.

Thine ever,

GAY.

The same address, Vere street, dearest.

LETTER XXI

I GOBBLED your letter this morning, dear, dear Vera, twenty times, dear. No, I won't give you my right address or tell you where I am. I am tired of being known. I am afraid of my shadow. I—well, I won't.

I have seen my master, Captain Wilde; he has lent me the money to buy my habit, and I go out with him and the hounds next week.

My rooms are celestially comfortable, but I am out all day in a riding habit the country tailor faked up for me. Captain Wilde's horses are rippling. The select young ladies whom I escort round the newly erected riding-school twice a week are *awful*—smirking, cowardly creatures, with arms like a bargee and hands like sixteen-pound weights. I have insisted on the head annexing several ancient gees whose mouths are as hard as iron and whose spirits are ground to nothing. To train bumping, flopping women to ride the horses that Captain Wilde (I must call him Barty to you, but he isn't Barty to me—you understand the distinction?) has provided would ruin any horse under twenty with a decent mouth. And my pupils like the ancient amblers I have provided much better than their former wild steeds, for, of course, as Miss Thompson ("Moonlight Soap"—you can guess her history and her fortune) wisely observed:

"Papa will buy us" (there are three of them) "horses well trained, so that a touch will make them understand our wishes."

I can see the horses the Thompsonian family will purchase.

"Why shouldn't I buy your horses?" I suggested, mindful of my percentage.

"Oh, do!" said Miss Thompson; "two will be sufficient; we have four carriage horses already. But spare no expense, Miss Hughes. Papa always likes to pay two hundred and fifty for his horses—he says you must pay for blood," in a tone of horrible solemnity.

They are amusing, those girls. On the other hand, Lady Sibyl—well, I won't tell you her name, for you will know the county if I do—came to buy a horse. She did not see what she liked, and next day Barty sent me with a groom and three horses—the groom led one—to "The Towers."

Lady Sibyl can ride, but she is about as insolent a woman as I ever met. Oh, my dear, how women—some women—love to kick the others if they can. But no matter. Smiles never earned a woman a decent living from another woman. She bought a horse, and offered me beer in the servants' hall! Needless to say, I refused. I heard her brother ask Smithers, my attendant, who is old and somewhat grumpy, who I was.

"Lady, sir," said Smithers, and I loved him for it.

"Ah!" said this insolent youth, while I sat perfectly still as Lady Sibyl patted the bay mare I rode, "and lives with Captain Wilde?"

"No, sir," rapped out Smithers; "she lives alone."

And the young man then offered me a brandy-and-soda, but I said, "No, thank you," and got home starving and weary. After a warm bath and some dinner Barty came in with orders for to-morrow. I am to ride to the meet at Varley on Shadow. Barty is coming, too. Shadow is, or rather was, a fiend of a horse, and Barty wants to sell him. Woe betide the man or woman purchaser if he or she has not light hands, a good temper and a fancy for Shadow!

We had a glorious run, dear Vera. I felt as if all I had yearned for had

come to me as I followed the hounds. I was in at the death and got the brush. Life and freedom were in the air. The wild rush, the glorious speed of my horse, and the mad exhilaration made me forget—forget everything except that Shadow and I were together. He enjoyed it. I have to sit still when I ride him and let him alone. I don't mind confessing that he could carry me to the end of life if he liked, and I should not be able to stop him, but he chooses to obey my lightest touch. Why I called him "Shadow" I don't know; simply because he is dark, and—well, why does a woman do anything?

I must say the remarks that I overhear are embarrassing.

"Who is she?" over and over again, as we waited at Varley Arms.

"What! a horse dealer, with Wilde? You don't mean to say so! Ripping girl! And how she rides! Well mounted, too. The horse is fit to carry more weight than her perfect figure."

"She is out on spec," said the first man, "and that horse is for sale."

"I'll buy him; he'd carry me."

"What is she?" asked a woman.

"A protégée of Wilde's"—man's voice.

"Fair and square?" interrogatively.

"Fair and round," he answered.

"Has a past, I suppose," said the woman.

"Nonsense; pasts are not worn—everybody has one, but it's buried. Women are all romantic, young and fresh nowadays."

To-day, as I rode in the school, Captain Wilde appeared with the man I had seen in the hunting-field, who had announced his intention of buying Shadow.

"Lord Varley has come to see Shadow," said Barty, "and thinks of buying him."

I felt tears in my eyes. Shadow and I were such friends. I regretted I had displayed the horse to such advantage. Lord Varley insisted on my riding him, and he accompanied me on a big lumbering cob.

"Anything is good enough to jog

about the roads on," he said, "but for hunting you must have the best."

What a funny idea! I believe men look on non-hunting horses as they do on a motor car—merely a vehicle to carry them from place to place.

"I should prefer a Bath chair or a cradle to your mount," I retorted.

He laughed. I could see Barty looking daggers at me. But what could I do? I know I was engaged to sell horses, and sell them I must, but Shadow—

"He goes awfully kind with you," said this ugly man. He has heaps of money and no brains; for once the gods have been kind.

"Don't you want to ride him?" asked Barty.

"Oh, certainly," said Lord Varley, so we changed saddles, and Shadow's eyes looked nasty, as if he didn't like it.

Then the would-be purchaser had a pleasant quarter of an hour. Shadow did everything that the mind of a horse can conceive and the legs of a horse execute in the way of wickedness. I don't wonder Lord Varley rides a Bath chair! His hands are as heavy as a coster's after driving a donkey, and Shadow's mouth is as tender as mine. At last Barty rushed out and took hold of the horse's head.

"You'll never be able to ride him," he said, candidly.

Lord Varley looked perturbed.

"He's a brute; he certainly is not safe for—" he looked at a loss for a word to describe me—"for a lady," with a gulp.

He deserves the Victoria Cross for that.

"He is a lamb with me," I answered.

"I want to buy him, Wilde. I think if you let Miss Hughes ride him every day he will get all right for me. For I will buy the horse."

And then he departed. And Shadow, my beloved Shadow, is going. I know, because I love him.

Lady Sibyl and her brother arrived after Lord Varley's departure. How lovely to be like her and all those women who are rich enough to have

life staged to suit their beauty, their talents and their particular bent! To have the environment that suits a woman means she has won the greater part of the battle of this life.

One sees life and love so much more clearly when it is over. It is a joy to lay all at the feet of a strong man; love is worth having.

My dear, I realize there is a great gulf fixed between the people who are face to face with destiny, who fight with a demon that may pull them down any day, and those who face the commonplace, the neat ways of life, whose lives are soft and well regulated and whose career is bounded by dinners followed by balls, which hospitality they can easily return. One dinner differeth from another in the glory of the entrée; that is the only way they mark the days.

Lord Varley still comes over to ride Shadow, so far unsuccessfully. Barty glares at him. He evidently suspects him of trying to make love to me. At all the meets I find that women stare harder than men. Why, I wonder? I heard Lady Sibyl say, the other day, to her companion, a man:

"He is only beating about the bush; if he really meant anything he would climb into it and not mind the thorns."

"Wilde can't say the alphabet after the letter L," retorted the man. "Love is as far as he can get with her," and they both laughed.

Barty is so good to me. He works me pretty hard, but he knows I like work. Now, by being good to me, don't imagine I would insinuate that he loves me; that would be the cruellest cut Fate's whip could give me. He comes to see me occasionally, and smokes a silent pipe by my fireside. We make jerky remarks about the horses, and he stays only an hour. Besides, in this dim borderland of existence, unpeopled by chaperons and eligible men, we are friends as a man and a woman can be.

When a woman works for her living there is no time to hear the

clamoring of the crowds who murmur marriage. I made a mistake in my life. I tried to be what Colonel Gore thought I was instead of letting him re-create his opinion of me as I am. I tried to live up to his gospel instead of preaching one of my own, and a sickening failure I made of it.

Thine, as always, as much thine as when I wrote more frequently,

GAY.

LETTER XXII

MY DEAR VERA:

I have not written for ages. The peaceful pall of lots of work, which tires my body and mind so completely that my thoughts are dead, has descended upon me, and I am getting quite fat.

Lord Varley still yearns to own and ride Shadow, and frequently appears at the stables, though I am sure Shadow will never allow himself to behave quietly with him. Barty hates Lord Varley, why, I can guess, for Shadow is only an excuse for seeing me. The other night we were coming home from a meet, and Barty announced sadly that Lord Varley was no good.

"Don't misunderstand me," he said. "Lord Varley's reputation here as an excellent landlord has quite obscured the variableness of his affections as regards women."

"You mean——?" I asked. "You might as well tell me all of it. You are afraid of my vanity being flattered and of my heart being broken by thinking that Lord Varley has contracted an undying passion for my charms?"

"Yes," answered Barty, simply.

"Put all those ideas out of your head," I answered. "It is not at all probable that I shall ever be flattered again by any man's passion for me. No doubt Lord Varley thinks me fair and unprotected game."

"I'll break every bone in his body if he dares to think anything of the sort," growled Barty.

We went into the stable yard, and I dismounted.

The horses' beds were being put down; the smell of the fresh straw was good, and the clinking of pails and the light from the big harness-room was very cheery.

Barty went off to look after one of the horses that has influenza, and I strolled down to speak to George, the head of the stables.

He was in the harness-room, and sitting before the fire was a woman, disheveled, with the remains of a certain amount of beauty, but eyes that glared with unnaturally distended pupils; evidently a woman who drank and whose tongue could be used like a whip. I certainly did not approve of George's friend.

"Who is this?" she demanded, and as George did not answer she turned to me.

"Who are you? One of my husband's fancy ladies, I suppose?" with a sneer.

"I am Miss Hughes," I said.

"Well, Miss Hughes, I have come to look after Captain Wilde, my husband, myself."

So I departed and found Barty.

"I am afraid we are in for a nice epidemic," he announced, sadly. "Pride is dying."

"Your wife is in the harness-room," I answered.

He said something under his breath and then looked up at me. His face was drawn and white; it looked like plaster of paris in which someone had cut deep lines.

"I am going home," I said. "If you want me, send for me."

"How did she find me?" he muttered. "Well, she'll ruin the whole show now."

When I went round to the school next morning my usual pupils were there, and I took them out for a good gallop, which gave those beef-fed, phlegmatic young women such a shaking as they never will have again. I did not see Barty, and the day passed in exercising various horses that he wants trained as ladies' mounts.

The next day there was a meet. We started early, and the cold fog

struck terror to my usually never faint heart.

Whom do you suppose I met as we reached the cross-roads? Sir Anthony Erskine! He knew me. I avoided him and gave him no chance of speaking to me. He is engaged to Lady Sibyl. She, mounted on an ambling old horse, held a court of congratulation.

We had a good run. As we came home Shadow seemed to be very tired. It surprised me, for the pace had not been very fast, nor the going heavy. He held his head down and stumbled; his feet seemed to be too heavy for him.

"Shadow is going to have it," said Barty, laconically, as we went in at the yard gate.

By next morning, when I came round, Shadow seemed better, though his eyes looked so dull, his coat was all rough, and his cough was very bad.

We were in the middle of going over hurdles, for it was pouring rain and there was no cross-country work to be done, when in rode Lady Sibyl, followed by Sir Anthony. He immediately seized Barty, and they went off to look at a hunter. Lady Sibyl signed to me and said:

"I should like to get off; can you hold my horse?"

One of the boys came forward and Mrs. Wilde appeared. She explained to Lady Sibyl who she was.

They departed into Mrs. Wilde's sitting-room after Lady Sibyl had accepted her offer of a cup of tea.

The lesson was finished. The ladies of soap-and-blackening renown vanished after trying to obtain a glimpse of Lady Sibyl, whom they were very anxious to know. The great gulf that fixes itself between the Lady Sibyls and the soap is not bridged in a day by horses or lady trainers like me.

It was time for my lunch, and I felt tired, but I went to Shadow to see how he was.

George was standing by him, his cheerful countenance puckered up gruesomely.

"I guess he will die," he remarked. "The vet's been here four times. I know as much as any vet, and I can't save him."

Shadow was lying down. He lifted his head when I called him softly, and his poor glazed eyes brightened a little.

"Oh, Shadow!" I murmured, and I sat down by him. They had tried everything, mustard, blisters, and all the medicines that could be found. Brave old Shadow! he knew me, and I sat and stroked him. We had had many a good day together; many a weary fit of moping had he cured for me. We had followed the hounds and were good comrades always—my friend, to whom I could talk and tell everything. My dear old Shadow was dying, and I could only pat him.

Once or twice he scrambled to his feet and then fell down again; he was too weak. His eyes gazed at me with the torture of the unknown in them.

"Oh, Shadow, Shadow!" I murmured. "I wish you could take me with you into oblivion or to the happy hunting ground, where we could ride on forever."

By four o'clock in the morning he was dead, and as I made my way across the stable yard, Mrs. Wilde met me.

"Oh!" she said as I passed her, "Lady Sibyl brought me a fine history of you. Sir Anthony told her. Fancy, your daring to come here, Miss Vandeleur! Miss Hughes! You should be called Mrs. Gore."

"What does it matter?" I asked.

So she gazed at me somewhat disappointedly and let me pass.

Sir Anthony must be like wax in Lady Sibyl's hands. I suppose she has found the way to his head as well as his heart.

What is going to be the end of all this?

Surely I have paid to the uttermost farthing! But now Shadow is dead, and I don't care for anything. I shall never take any more pleasure in the gallops again. I wish—

Barty interrupted me. He came to tell me that the other horses are all

better and that Sir Anthony had bought two. That means thirty pounds percentage for me.

"You have heard what Lady Sibyl said?" I inquired.

He answered "Yes," for I had told him my history before he engaged me.

"Your wife will spread it all over the town."

"She has done it already," he answered. "But it doesn't matter; keep up your courage."

Here we reckoned without the soap-and-blacking young ladies.

They paid well. They had been a great help to Barty. I was interrupted, and now I must go to Lady Sibyl to give her a lesson. I am a teaching machine.

Vera, Vera, why do you write to me about the past? It is dead.

Yours ever,

GAY.

LETTER XXIII

MY DEAREST:

I have not written for some days. Oh, my beloved, the world is hard without any padding of love to prevent one feeling the bumps and jerks of life's coach. But no matter; I will be gay, and never think of the bogies in the dark places of the road or of what might happen.

The death-knell of my career here has sounded. Mrs. Wilde has spread the news of my former part on the stage of the divorce court. The first alarm was the non-appearance of my pupils; their enthusiasm was unbounded, my reputation has killed it. I have one pupil left, one of the newest, who hopes to marry an Honorable, an Irish one, who is Master of the Hounds in the Emerald Isle. He makes it a condition, before bestowing his ancient name on her, in exchange for the ample fortune her fond papa is willing to provide, that she must be able to stick on a horse's back long enough to ride to the meet and home again.

I fear the lady will never do more

than that, for she bumps and wobbles and screams at every movement of the ancient steed provided for her. Her society is not exhilarating.

The other ladies have not turned up, and Captain Wilde has received epistles from their respective papas declining to send their daughters for lessons because of the rumors they have heard about the reputation of the instructress.

Lord Varley haunts the stables.

Mrs. Wilde remarked:

"It is not a Shadow that Lord Varley comes after now."

Of course I must go. The business is being ruined, and all on my account. The little country paper rings with my record, the shop people stare at me, my landlady is morose. The career of a detached pirate is dull in the country, where a divorced woman has appeared once in a thousand years, perhaps not so often.

Yesterday at the meet I rode a big chestnut that Barty wants to sell, and who do you suppose came to speak to me? Sir Anthony.

I looked at him after politely returning his bow.

"I thought," I said, "that there was honor among men, even if there was none among women. Why did you tell Lady Sibyl my history? She told the county!"

"Sibyl? Impossible."

"Then ask her," I retorted, and I rode after Barty.

I saw Sir Anthony speak to his future wife. She grew scarlet. He is a just man, I know, for has not Dick Gore said so? I know Lady Sibyl will wish she had held her tongue.

We had a glorious gallop, and at what a pace we went!

I never rode so recklessly, nor so well. The chestnut took his head and the biggest fences, and I didn't care whether I lived or died. Perhaps death would be better, after all. You know there is no place in this world for the likes of me. Men believe me bad, and women won't give me a chance. I don't belong to the vast ranks of the women who have

gone under. I *won't* belong to them. So, where am I? Between death and the devil, it strikes me.

Sir Anthony came over this morning. He brought Lady Sibyl and left her outside. He says she regrets having confided in Mrs. Wilde, but she did it for my good. In reality, she regrets being found out.

He offered me all kinds of assistance, but I said:

"No, thank you. You can't whitewash me. What you have said you have said, and it is all over."

Mrs. Wilde has been more civil to me. Sir Anthony talked to her, I know.

She reminds me of a very sad old dog. Her huge upper lip trembles and her jaw drops in such a funny way. She drinks far too much, and her husband looks worried to death.

Lord Varley has paid me a state call; he came to offer me his hand and title.

"I am not much of a chap," he said, jerkily—he takes about a minute to say each word—"and I can't ask you to love me. I know I have very bad hands for riding, but if you could marry me, I'd make you happy."

"You want me to marry you?" I inquired. I never was so surprised in my life. "Have you heard the gossip? Have you heard my story?"

"You are the pluckiest woman and the best rider I ever saw," he answered, growing a dusky red, "and I never admired any woman so much. You have the real thing—*courage*."

Ah, Vera, the men we don't want always see and admire our virtues! If only the other man saw them as plainly!

"Don't answer me—don't be in a hurry at the fence," he said, beseechingly. "Give me time—wait for a week," and so he departed.

What shall I do? Here's an honest man, with a good heart and a better stable, offering me all—fortune, title and a home. My weary mind says: "Accept it," and my heart says: "Refuse! If you can't take what you want, don't take a substitute." I want a home and money and many

things. How would I like--how would I tolerate, Lord Varley? For breakfast, for luncheon, for dinner—except at a dinner-party; but there would be no dinners given in my honor in this county. I think Sir Anthony might have warned me. I wonder if I could dye my hair and paint my face and look so different that, as Lady Varley, the county would receive me without recognizing me as the lady with the piebald reputation? No; then I should be afraid to hunt, for the rain would wash off my false eyebrows and my paint, and change the color of my hair, or else my wig would blow off.

How true it is that time deadens the smart of the hard things we have had said to us; but does it deaden the stabs of those we hate? I think not. I seem to remember now the kind things the System has done for me. (You never mention his name in your letters; I suppose he is married and repenting, or—hateful thought—rejoicing.) I remember we had been at a dinner-party, and it was a very cold night; my feet were frozen, and he rubbed them so gently, so firmly, so kindly. Here I am, just like a woman, digging up the past.

I have been packing my pet books and pictures. Barty has a friend in one of the big towns who has a business of this sort, and I shall go to him, if he will have me. Barty has written a panegyric on my virtues in the saddle. I go if I refuse Lord Varley. What would you advise? It is so hard to know! He knows the worst of me, and that is a consolation. I shall act on impulse, as I always do.

I have not heard from you for some time. My trusted messenger has not been to Vere street to get your letters, so I will send this short one, and let you know to-morrow what is to be my fate.

Yours always,
GAY.

P. S.—I had just written my name when in came Barty with one from you. I devoured it. Shall I come and see you on my way to my new

work? I think not. But oh, my Vera, your offer of a home made me sit down and fall to weeping, as say the ladies of the olden time. How could I quarter myself on you, whose burden, dearest, is as great as mine? No, alone I started my career and alone I shall finish it, while none the less do I value your friendship, the gift of the gods.

Here I stopped and began to consider the frocks I would have in my trousseau if I married Lord Varley. I was lost in the mysteries of accordéon pleating. What man ever thought of the possibilities of new neckties if he married? It is new clothes that drag half of us to the altar, I verily believe. What bridegroom ever looks so important in a frock-coat as his bride does in her long court train?

I was vulgarly employed in tossing with a shilling to see if I would marry Lord Varley. The shilling hopped, skipped and jumped away under the sofa, and I lay down on the floor to find it, to see whether it was heads I married him or tails I did not.

At this awful moment, my landlady (who has heard rumors of Lord Varley's infatuation, and whose former contempt for the divorce court has changed into admiration for me—to think of my luck, being divorced by a colonel, and married again by a marquis!), well, at this moment she opened the door and ushered in Lord Varley. I rose with disarranged hair and a scarlet countenance to face the possibilities of this man being my future husband, without having found the answer. Even if that shilling said "Yes" I decided at that instant to say "No," for he wore a triumphant air of possession. No woman ever knows what a man can be like as her husband until she sees what effect the idea of the possession of herself will have on him.

"What were you looking for?" he inquired, gazing at me.

"For you!" I retorted, and there—there was my shilling by the fender! I threw myself down by it—it was tails! Intuition—which, by the way, is

a little gland in the brain, and is larger in a woman than a man—had not played me false.

"For me!" he exclaimed.

I will tell you more to-morrow.

It is post time.

GAY.

LETTER XXIV

DEAR VERA:

He took his blow well, that little man; if his hands are heavy his heart is kind. He told me he had come for his answer. I talked a little, and the light I loathed gradually died out of his eyes. I felt sorry for him, though I would not have rekindled it for all the world can give.

Sympathy is the most weak-minded of all the virtues; I believe that. I said good-bye to my little adorer, and he departed somewhat dolefully. I began to pack in real earnest, for Barty sent me a letter from his chum in the South, expressing huge delight at my advent, and offering me a much larger salary than I had ever dared dream about. The new instructress here, who takes my place, is an ancient lady who wears a gauze veil. She is like a plucky, worn-out old hunter, but looks as game as possible. Mrs. Wilde and she have already groaned over my wickedness and arranged for the curses of heaven to fall on my head. The ladies who feared my contaminating influence have returned to the school, and their horses trot and canter up and down in a very quiet way compared to the gait at which I led them.

I couldn't have married Lord Varley. I could not stand him. I will never marry *anyone*. He grew so hatefully pawing when he wanted to express his affection for me, and yet his only fault really is that he is himself. I know what you would have said if I had agreed to be Lady Varley. You would have produced the old arguments, the old assertion, that in spite of all I am no more free to marry than a woman whose husband

is in Hong Kong, and who thinks she'll take another because she feels lonely. But you need not again preach me that long sermon, as you did when I suggested marrying Sir Anthony.

Do you know, I believe I am not half so good-looking as I used to be? My figure has not faded, and my feet are as pretty as ever—they, praise the saints! never fade—but I look worn and thin. Of course, I don't wear the good clothes I used to—money, dear, and no audience. One can't walk down the streets of a village arrayed in a Félix savory. Why not savory? A much nicer dish than a confection, and dressmakers still label their works as if they were sweets. I suppose the word arose in the days when we wore pink and blue and white gowns, just like fashionable ices or sticks of toffee. Well, now we must call them savories.

But to return to my looks, I am tired of a riding habit; I yearn for frills again, and I bear in my face the marks that my once worst enemy and my now dear friend, Time, has planted there. He was my enemy because I hated to think of growing old; he is my friend because he brings that passage with Charon nearer. Morbid, you will say! Not at all; only philosophical, for we have to die, and we may as well think of it with joy.

You know it is only in books that the heroine remains as beautiful as Venus through all the tragic adventures that nearly turn the poor reader's hair gray, but they have not the slightest effect on the lady's bloom. Fortunately, one is seldom so despairing, nor so wildly elated, as the people in books. Those emotions do not wear.

I am gazing at my little cottage rooms and saying good-bye to them. I know there are spirits in rooms. How is it that some houses strike terror to one's soul and others are full of peace?

Barty has sent for me and disturbed me. It is dark and cold, and I don't want to turn out. I shall have to put on my habit, for he wants me to ride

the chestnut. Some purchaser has turned up, I suppose. Since my history was published in the paper, the business, among men, has been very brisk, too brisk.

Vera, may the gods send me coherence!

I dressed and went over to the riding-school, which has lately been fitted with incandescent lights.

I got on the chestnut and rode him over all the hurdles. Barty and a man were standing in the distance, at the end of the chilly, dreary place. The chestnut was pulling, but he settled down pretty well. I felt tired, and my arms ached. The lights flickered and jumped and gurgled in the irritating way such lights do. At last I stopped.

"Will that do, Captain Wilde?"

"Yes, thank you," answered Barty. "I'll go and tell someone to bring Darkeye," and he vanished.

My fidgety mount began to show his desire to return to his stable, and I got off as George came to fetch him. I strolled across the tan bark, and just as I reached the platform the lights went down until a dim glimmer was all that remained. The would-be purchaser came out of the black shadow, and as he heard me he whispered:

"Gay, I am here. Forgive me. *I love you!*"

It was Dick! My System! Colonel Gore!

I was too surprised to speak; I just said: "Dick!"

He put his arms round me—not weak, inanimate arms, but strong ones! strong! How lovely, yet I pushed him away.

"I am tired; let me go."

"I have seen Vera; I have read your letters. Gay! Gay! forgive me and love me a little. I love you absolutely. I know the truth. I have come to take care of you. I have come for my wife."

His arms were round me.

Oh, Vera, I have you to thank for this.

And he *loves*, LOVES, LOVES me!

I am gorgeously, gloriously happy. Good-night, my best friend.

Thine ever,

GAY.

LETTER XXV

Hotel Metropole, London.

DEAREST:

We were remarried at the Registrar's last week. Dick said that was the best way of arranging matters. We couldn't go to a court and say *I* had not told the truth, could we? Nor produce a checked suit and say: "Here is all that ever existed of Charlie Woodward?"

My gown was sweet, and I did not require any china-pot complexion. There is nothing so good for the skin as happiness, but the beauty doctors would make no money if we were all happy. Barty and Sir Anthony were the witnesses. Dick told them the truth.

We are soon coming to see you, but for the present Dick says I am his only. Fancy his saying that! He is not a husband, he is a lover! We quarrel, you will be glad to hear, but only to avert the Day of Judgment and also to create conversation.

Well, we were married, and we drove here in a hansom. There were no favors and no orange blossoms. Aunt Lydia gave us too many of them at our first marriage. We sat down and talked, talked like Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, of all things in our hearts, and, Vera, I am not afraid of him *ever* now.

Dick says that he never passed through such days of torment as he did when he thought I was in love with Charlie Woodward, and then again in Canada, with "Sir Anthony, the man from Australia and that brute Morgan." I quote his words: "I was desperate. I nearly carried you off."

"If you only had!" I said. "If you only had!"

"Has life been so awful for you, Gay? Can I keep you from feeling the scars?"

"Yes," I said. "I am not going to remember it ever again. I feel as

if there was no yesterday, no to-morrow, only to-day, and I am so happy!"

He still has the diagonal line on his forehead. I kissed it, but oh, Vera, the rest, the peace, the absolute calm of it, to know that he loves me and that I can do no wrong. I think you know my life has made me see more clearly; my eyes are opened, and I know that his love is worth all the moonshine rubbish of the world, and he—he is as I would have him, for he *loves* me, and shows it. It is of no use to bury love in the dull grave of friendship; it is much better to resurrect friendship and mix it with love.

Dick is going to command the depot of the old regiment. It is in such a good hunting county, and though I fear the comments of the women, yet I can face anything with his arms round me and his voice to say, "Well done, sweetheart." He will never write a sonnet to my eyebrows, but he has strong arms and often catches me in them, to punish me, as he calls it—for what? for leaving him. I wish you could hear him say "Sweetheart!" but you never will, for he says it to me alone. You must not think a second honeymoon is necessarily dull; it is not at all. I told Dick this morning that this was the nicest honeymoon I had ever spent, and he laughed, for, you see, he knows all about both. When I was first married I was a fool; an utter out and out one. But now I know I have never asked Dick about Miss Kitson; she does not exist for me. He reminded me of her this morning and told me she said that I was the bravest woman she ever knew.

"Why didn't you marry her?" I asked. "You might have got on well together, as she appreciated my one virtue."

"I did not marry her because I loved you, and she did not care for me when she discovered that. She has married a parson."

"Dick," I whispered, "did you ever *really* have a doubt about Charlie Woodward?"

"Yes, after I rescued you that night

in the snow; but when Maul turned up and said *he* was Woodward, I let the fiends of rage and jealousy kill all belief in you, and though the idea of your marrying him, or anyone else, was like whip-cuts to me, I ran away to York Redoubt until you had left Halifax, as I thought, with him. He went the day you did; everyone thought the same. I thought you had been fooling me. Sometimes, Gay, I nearly groveled at your feet and begged you to take me back."

I know that, but I do not say so. Vera, if it had not been for you I should still be miserable—if you had not insisted on seeing Dick. Dear, I think you are an angel.

We drank your health at dinner on our wedding night like they drink Omar Khayyám's—in silence, with a glass turned down for you and a little prayer in my heart. Through you Dick found me, through you he believed in me.

"How many letters of mine did you read, Dick?" I asked.

"All Vera would give me; she said some of them made her cry. But I had such a wild-goose chase to find you! You gave yourself away by mentioning Lady Sibyl, when all the papers announced her engagement to Sir Anthony Erskine, and said he was staying at the Castle; then we knew where to find you. I came down early and told Wilde the whole story. He managed you should meet me without your knowing you were going to see me."

And now, Vera, we are coming to see you when his two months' leave is over. Dick says I am prettier than ever, and he is so good to me! All he regrets are the days, the months, we have wasted, but I tell him perhaps we might have settled down a dull, grumpy couple, with no love for each other, just indifference, not even hatred; but now we *know*.

My foolish letters have done some good; they and you have given me my heart's desire; and what more can I want, for I am a woman?

Yours, until we meet, dear,
GAY.

A BALLAD OF BEING BROKE

WHEN the last string snaps and a man goes broke,
 He turns to the woods or the sea;
 He cuts clean loose from the home-bred folk,
 While love and honor go up like smoke,
 And life is a gamble, and death is a joke,
 And the universe good to see.

There's a brand-new sort of a fate for him;
 They may languish early and late for him;
 The bird on the wing is a mate for him,
 And the hawk on the hunt goes free.

There's the brown and gloom of the forest track,
 Where the deer go ghostly by;
 There's the starving camp and the deadweight pack,
 The moosehide lodge or the trapper's shack,
 And a wolf's fierce life in the pine woods black,
 And the freedom of the sky.

There's the plunging deck and the jarring screw,
 And the oilskins bright with foam;
 The stokehole's blaze and its naked crew,
 Or the topsails drenched with the Gulf Stream dew,
 And the sharp, salt breath of the landless blue,
 Where a man forgets his home.

We know it, my friends of the "broke brigade,"
 Pals of the plain and sea;
 Single-handed and unafraid,
 The artists of life and the fools of trade,
 But we think we know how the game is played,
 And we know where it's best to be.

There are some that may wait and pray for us;
 There is luck that never will stay for us;
 But the woods and the waves will make way for us
 When the "broke brigade" goes free!

FRANK LILLIE POLLOCK.



HE WAS NOT TO BLAME

MISS SWEETLY—Did you marry your first love?
 MR. HAINT—No; but it was all her own fault. She let my second
 love cut her out.

SOCIETY IN ROME

By Julien Gordon

(Mrs. Van Rensselaer Cruger)

TO a person accustomed to the society of a great metropolis, that of all Italian cities, except Rome, must seem small, contracted and trivial. Roman life, with its varied hues, its "whites" and "blacks," its papal and secular courts, its double diplomatic representation, its old aristocracy and foreign element, offers a curious medley, a striking panorama.

Added to its mere indoor entertainment, Rome has a large, vivid, out-of-door life—bicycling and horse-back-riding on the plains, *palla* for the natives, tennis and golf for the lovers of these sports, and walks in villa gardens. Then there are the "meets," where the unknown traveler sits on a stone wall and chews his mid-day sandwich, while the distinguished stranger bowls past on a coach driven by some Roman patrician. The more luxurious of these gentlemen send their lackeys to spread the picnic meal under the shadow of sarcophagi. Champagne flows, truffles abound, fruits, sweets and coffee are enjoyed *al fresco*. Others breakfast under tents. Pretty women in tailor-made frocks, light coats and hats, and smart men in pink lend an almost startling foreground to the dim grayness of the sad Campagna.

In Florence, save for the brief brilliancy of the Spring races, there is less sport, as is the case also in Siena and Naples.

Italian women are lazy, yet hardly as much so as the men. No people are more industrious and harder-worked than the laborers, few so indolent as the higher class. The ladies, however, have their children, chari-

ties, churches. What the men have to occupy them it is difficult to decide. Possibly it is this *flânerie* which makes them adepts in the art of love. Passion to an Italian becomes absorbing. While it lasts it is absolute. Every hour, every minute, is devoted to the pursuit of the beloved. She is viewed as a fair enemy, as a prey whose destruction, or, at least, capture, is worth every breath of day. This is, perhaps, one reason that, while far from intellectual, Italians are dangerous to unsophisticated women.

Italian women who are honest fear men. They put up their shutters. There is no pretty philandering. Anglo-Saxon women, less prudent, surer of themselves, play with the fire. Sometimes they get burned. Anglo-Saxons are children in intrigue compared with the Latins.

Companionship between the sexes exists little in Italy—such companionship as America permits and fosters. There is love or there is indifference. The one is hot, fierce, swift; the other is satisfied with the posing of cards, a show of gallantry, a word *en passant* in street or salon.

Of Italian ladies it may be said that from our point of view they are not good hostesses. They are too much engaged in the detail of their own daily existence, which must, perforce, remain a trifle pale to the outsider. They seem to us timid, narrow and dull, possessing little of the tact and ease that give savor to an afternoon call. And they have no initiative, no originality, in their conversation. They watch foreigners with curiosity, but without enthusiasm. Women friendships are unknown and consid-

ered frivolous. Mere perfunctory intercourse appears to be satisfying to the majority—chatting on unimportant subjects and a little gossip, with great prudence in the expression of personal opinion.

Religion takes up a good deal of time. It is material and positive, a thing of hours and habit. A presumably well-educated and intelligent woman, a lady of rank and position, when asked if she ever had an intellectual doubt, replied: "I never pause to think about it." This is the keynote of Italian faith. It doesn't stop to reflect.

The women are frequently handsome for a short season, between the angularity of childhood and the stoutness to which they allow themselves to succumb in early middle life. The poise of the head is proud; the bony structure of the face fine. They are rarely well dressed, erring particularly as to choice of color. One can meet them a hundred times without their giving out one of those revealing flashes which bare the heart and unveil the intelligence. Until we are quite sure this characteristic springs from reserve it is natural to suppose it an attribute of shallowness.

The men pass the greater part of their lives in the street, standing in front of convenient clubs or cafés, or driving short distances in cabs. They never walk. Without much solid education, they appear cleverer than their women. They seem to know a good deal—about history, art and poetry—through a sort of inhalation of the atmosphere in which they move. They draw in these things without effort. Yet the modern Italian is strangely lacking in imagination. Is it paradoxical to suppose that this may, in a measure, account for the remarkable fidelity of which they are sometimes capable?

While mutual regard and interest may insure a husband's faithfulness long after his wife has ceased to charm by youth or beauty, it is more curious that this loyalty exists in a lighter tie. *Liaisons* where unhappily married people have determined

to console each other have been known to last nearly a lifetime, and, where the lady became a widow, to be followed by marriage, when she was far over forty, fat, and no longer fair. These late, rehabilitating unions have been noted for deep affection, for an extraordinary devotion, and marked with inconsolable sorrow at the final separation.

A woman to be beloved by an Italian need be on no pedestal, either of goddess or of saint. It must be admitted that until he is actually riveted in blue ribbons the young Italian lover seems to have an inclination to—escape. One hears of maidens abandoned almost at the altar. The fear of any definite shackle appears to be a nervous idiosyncrasy of the Italian.

A Venetian acknowledged to us that he took a train three days before his nuptials, abandoning a girl who was highly born, well bred and even dowered (not an unimportant detail to the Latin). When we told him that in America a young man would hardly boast of such an exploit, he replied, "*Mi seccava.*" To be fettered or bored is the acme of a Venetian's terror.

Another youth, after his American fiancée's trousseau was complete, wrote her that his mother did not admire her manners, and "planted" her thus, without reason or remorse. "I cannot," he said to her, "although deeply attached to you, vex my mother."

Still another broke his troth summarily, giving as his excuse that he disliked to see his bride-elect kiss her little brother. A Florentine was lately dragged to the church only under protest so violent that it caused scandal. Physical cowardice decided him, however, he being in dread of the Mafia, to which the young woman's brothers belonged. In France such stories are never heard. Marriage to a Frenchman is a serious contract. His betrothal is a pledge from which retraction, except under peculiar provocation, would mean disgrace and dishonor.

There is no doubt that there is much virtue among well-born Italian dames, the slightest deviation from rigorous conduct being frowned down by pious, old-fashioned families. In marriage settlements, where such minutiae as the granting of jewels, an opera box, a victoria, one or two horses—the number is discussed—and a maid are put down in black and white, sometimes a clause is inserted which binds the bride not to ask to be taken into the world. She is to be content to live quietly between her husband and children, possibly the greater part of the year at some solitary villa in the mountains. Fancy such an agreement signed by one of our Newport belles!

In a country where divorce is so difficult, even impossible, one hears occasionally of the elopement of a married woman. Sometimes it is the incongruous escapade of the mother of a family with some pretty young officer or boyish Lochinvar, sometimes of a childish and ingenuous wife with some old and experienced *mangeur de femmes*. It means, in either case, that love in Italy is a thing that can never be played at. An Italian may be as mild as milk, as delectable as sugar candy; but once in love, he becomes a dangerous animal, tyrannical, jealous, suspicious and cruel.

Family bonds are strong. As I have said, there are no women's, so there are no girls' intimacies. Well brought up virgins are never seen unless accompanied by their mother or a married sister. Theatre and opera parties are unknown; the *loge* is filled by the head of the family and members of his flock. Such useful accessories as boxes and carriages are not wasted on strangers. The daughters must be married, and the parents are busy in their behalf. Between the acts the favored young men are permitted the *entrée* of the boxes.

The dances in Italian cities begin earlier than ours. Of supper there is none—nothing, at least, that we would call a supper—little being served except cakes, bonbons, lemonades and such light refreshments. Where American and English women

preside, as they now do in so many European palaces, sometimes a more solid repast is provided. The dinners are like ours—banquets, gay with bowers, bright with splendid silver and crystal, delicate, elaborate, often over-long. The interiors of aristocratic homes in Italy are magnificent. Life is courtly and elegant. Manners seem to survive here as nowhere else. There is an exquisite courtesy. And this extends from the King to his meanest peasant. It springs, perhaps, from that element of sweetness which constitutes the chief attraction of Italian character.

Another trait that surprises *foreigners* is the unusual trust with which they are regarded. Shopkeepers will allow one to carry off expensive articles with merely a name and a number carelessly given. They often remain many days without coming to claim their pay. This custom is prevalent alike in cities and villages, and is a constant astonishment to the traveler, to whose proved honesty it is certainly a tribute.

Villa life is at its best in Tuscany and Venetia; unless, indeed, in the more smiling gardens of the southern Mediterranean regions. It is an embodiment of refined repose, of tranquil calm, and, be it said, of entire stagnation. The beauty of the country that poets sing and novelists extol is greatly exaggerated. Rich it is, no doubt, in tradition. It brings surprises of pictorial and sculptural art, of architectural remains, of curious antiquities and quaint relics. But, in spite of its vineyards and its olive trees, it leaves upon us an impression of aridity. Near the towns one walks or drives between high walls, in a burning sun, with thin white dust under one's feet. The road glares up at one like the lurid face of an enemy. Numberless and very hideous villas hang on the hillside. These houses, with their dependencies, their outbuildings, their piles of masonry, their artificial grottoes and stagnant fountains, give one a sense of clutter, of lack of breadth, dispiriting to the inhabitant of lonelier regions—those gracious

lands where wide horizons, stretches of field and meadow, sea marshes and fragrant forests lift the mind to higher

meditations, unbroken by the ugly reminders of man's sordid and petty aims.



MAIDEN-HAIR

NARCISSUS knelt beside this limpid pool—
See where his rosy knees the margin pressed;
In this dim spot, so fragrant and so cool,
Twin flowers unfold, by wooing winds caressed,

Like butterflies upon the crystal brink,
Bending to view reflection's flattery,
Bowing before the breeze as if to drink
Again the draught of immortality.

And where this unresponsive stone is clad
With feathery curls and fairy wisps of green,
Sank the forlorn, love-sick Auloniad
To veil her sorrow with her bright hair's sheen.

Thenceforth forever the fair fern doth weep
Like maiden's hair the mirrored pool above,
Through the unnumbered ages doomed to keep
The vigil of an unrequited love;

While Echo from sequestered vales and hills
With dying repetition mocks her grief,
And Zephyr dims Narcissus' glassy rills
With the light shadow of the falling leaf.

CLAUDE M. GIRARDEAU.



HAS A KNIFE OUT

DORIS—Aunt Mehitable never bows to Mrs. Lake-Evanston.

PHYLLIS—No; she regards her as one of those grass widows who need cutting.



NATURAL SCEPTICISM

JAGGLES—I have always thought that animals possess humor.

WAGGLES—So did I until I saw some of the animal pictures the comic artists draw.

LOVE IN AN OPERA BOX

By Mary Stewart Cutting

“ **T**HEN you would not mind—” she flushed as she spoke, and fingered the sticks of her ivory fan nervously—“ you would not mind if you knew that I had once worked for my living? I am glad the rest have left us. I wanted to speak to you alone.”

“ Worked for your living!” He looked incredulously at the slight, graceful figure beside him in the opera box, clothed in lace and satin, with pearls around her white throat and a diamond star nestling in her soft, fair hair. “ I can’t imagine such a thing. You seem born to the purple. Is this the wonderful disclosure that you promised me?”

“ Part of it.” She tried to smile into the dark eyes that regarded her seriously. “ Shall we sit a little further back in the shadow? Yes, this is better. You belong in some ways to a past age; you believe that a woman should not court publicity, that she should be shielded from contact with the world, and that it takes away from her delicacy, her refinement—well, her womanliness—to have to fight her own battles. Oh, you have said a great many things like this to me.”

“ Yes,” he said, “ that is true. I suppose I am behind the age. Of course, I know it’s the normal state of things in these days for women to paint, or teach, or lecture, or type-write, or dabble in some way at earning money, even if they don’t need it. That you should have had to work for your bread seems to me monstrous. But how could you think I would love you less for it? I love you ten times more.”

“ Hush!” she said, “ you mustn’t say that yet—you don’t understand. I earned my bread in none of these ways. I belonged to the people. Do you remember the little girl that we nearly ran over at the crossing tonight? She wore a shabby hat and jacket and carried a big bundle. You wondered why I wanted to stop and speak to her. I carried home bundles once, like that, and then—afterward—Oh, I am trying to tell you a great deal!”

“ You poor child,” he said, gently. Then he added: “ Were you so very poor?”

“ Very. My father died just after we came here from England. His marriage had displeased my grandfather, and it was five years before he sent for us. We had no money, no friends. My mother sewed for a living. There were kind people in the house, poor like us, and they helped her to get work. There was a girl, oh, so good and kind, older than I, and when my mother fell ill and could sew no more, Dora taught me her—trade, and I supported us both. I was very young.” She stopped, with a catch in her voice.

He bent in the shadowed corner of the box and kissed the fluttering hand nearest him. In the gay, rustling, crowded house they were two alone.

“ Dear,” he said, simply, “ don’t talk about this any more. You in want, and I upon this earth! That is what hurts me.”

“ And you don’t care to know?”

“ I care to know nothing—now. Can’t I feel you trembling? Ah, what does it matter? You are you. Why, dear heart, if you had been a

cigarette worker, a street singer or a ballet girl—”

“A ballet girl!”

“You shall not speak so lightly—*of one*. A ballet girl was my first love. I used to come here to see her ten years ago. It’s the same ballet to-night; I had a fancy for it. You need not mind! She was a little slip of a thing, with innocent blue eyes, who stood next the end of the line. She didn’t dance very well, but there was an unconscious, childish gladness in every motion. She seemed youth and joyousness and purity incarnate. I can’t describe to you how she affected me. It brought tears to my eyes sometimes to look at her. I don’t know what became of her, but I would stake my life on that child’s truth—that her surroundings had no power to touch her. Do you think me sentimental?”

“Horribly!” She laughed, but her cheek was pale. “Did you never speak to her?”

He shook his head. “No, but I sent her a present once—I was just leaving for Germany—a bunch of forget-me-nots and a little forget-me-not ring in them. It was very boyish.”

“Forget-me-nots! And then you went away and forgot all about her!”

“No, there you’re wrong. Do you know, the first time I saw your eyes I thought of her? They have the same expression. I have never found it in another woman, though I have always sought it. Consciously or unconsciously, it has been the touchstone of love with me. The orchestra is getting ready to begin, and everyone is coming back to the boxes. What have you to say to my story? Ah—” he stopped suddenly and drew a quick breath. “Why do you look at me like that, *here*, where I cannot kiss you?”

“Oh!” she sighed, and held her ungloved left hand in front of him. On the fourth finger was a forget-me-not ring.



THE WANT OF YOU

THE want of you is like no other thing;
It smites my soul with sudden sickening,
It binds my being with a wreath of rue,
This want of you!

It flashes on me with the waking sun,
It creeps upon me when the day is done,
It hammers at my heart the long night through,
This want of you!

It sighs within me with the misting skies;
Oh, all the day within my heart it cries;
Old as your absence, yet each moment new,
This want of you!

Mad with demand, and aching with despair,
It leaps within my breast, and you are—where?
God has forgotten—or He never knew—
This want of you!

ETHEL M. KELLEY.

THE PARTING OF THE WATERS

By Alice Duer and Henry Wise Miller

N EITHER of the two occupants of the Pullman compartment was heeding the panorama of country through which they were being rapidly drawn. Instead, she saw the sleek form of the ubiquitous sexton suddenly galvanized into life at the receipt of some occult signal; a pair of doors thrown open; a sea of flowers, both real and artificial; a white blur that she believed to be bridesmaids undulating before her, and then an endless queue of smiling, congratulatory faces. She heard herself responding with unmeaning phrases to those to whom she had wished to say most; but then, there had been so little time.

That was really the trouble with the whole affair—there had been so little time. If she had only had a moment to sit down and rest her eyes, that felt as if they had been sandpapered, and to relax the smile that had grown purely muscular! More than all this, she had wanted time to realize that the occasion was important, and she happy. And now all that remained was a confusion of memories and physical weariness.

He was wondering why it had been ordained that before entering the holy state of matrimony a man should be deprived of sleep by the necessity of entertaining his intemperate and riotous friends.

It was beginning to rain. Mrs. Waters thought that there had never been a flatter or more uninteresting country than that through which they were passing. She turned sharply from the window and looked at her husband expectantly. This, she realized, was the first half-hour they had

ever spent together which had not been notably amusing. She looked back on a long series of fortunate occasions when their mutual appreciativeness had enhanced their entertainment, so that in private they had never ceased to be amusing and in public had never failed to be amused; until she had come to identify their mirth and affection. Indeed, she now saw for the first time that he had always stood to her as a new conception of how enjoyable life could be made.

She looked out moodily on the monotony of the landscape and deplored the necessity of people going junketing over the country as soon as they were married, recalling with regret, too, that railroad travel always depressed her. She felt it high time that someone should resuscitate the conversation, and said, suggestively: "This must be Trenton."

"Only New Brunswick, I'm afraid," he replied, and silence again descended on the compartment.

In view of this condition of affairs it was at least infelicitous that the porter should have thought it necessary to give a preliminary rattle at the door handle on entering. Mrs. Waters's eyes rested on the unfurled evening paper that was all that indicated the presence of her husband, and glanced contemptuously at a heap of current literature that had been provided for her. Was it possible he was indifferent to the danger of her present mood? Or was his dramatic sense blind to an anti-climax?

The lighting of the over-brilliant lamps limited her range of vision to the compartment. The crackling of the paper continued to be the only in-

terruption to the silence. She had full opportunity, therefore, to realize that she was so tired that food was out of the question, while at the same time she looked forward to dinner as the inevitable moment when her husband should realize that she had become dangerously bored and depressed, and needed something more stimulating than the periodicals.

The paper rattled for the last time, and Mr. Waters reappeared. She looked up with keen interest to discover the method he must have evolved by which he could clear the atmosphere, and she was prepared to temper justice with mercy.

"Anything in the magazines?" he said.

Before she answered him she allowed that extra moment to elapse which, if it cannot be said to outrage courtesy, is at least more than affection allows.

"I haven't looked at them," she said. She supposed her tone unmistakable.

"No?" he answered, gently, and began to examine the heap with interest.

That mortal man could be so dense staggered her intellect almost as much as it bruised her affection, but chowed her that unless her own magnanimity should intervene nothing could now save the situation. The horrible fancy arose that her presence, which hitherto had served as a spur to his wit, now only nourished a sense of possession, and at this, if she had not felt the danger of floundering at his side, she would gladly have allowed him to sink in the quicksands of his own fatuousness. But having cherished this vision until it had almost acquired the value of an accomplished revenge, her generosity of spirit, a quality by which she set great store, suggested the quixotic nobility of giving him yet one more chance at rehabilitation. Dinner, she thought, would give this virtue a peculiar opportunity.

Mr. Waters's next remark was: "It's high time you had something to eat; you look tired."

Every woman knows that the difference between Mr. Waters's last remark and being told she looks plain is a difference not of fact but of courteous intent.

He touched the bell, and his man and the porter appeared, carrying a hamper between them. It was impossible that even Mrs. Waters's languid interest in life should not revive at the ingenious complexity of its internal arrangement. Cunningly contrived compartments yielded up china and glass; unsuspected pockets divulged knives and forks, and in a few minutes the table was furnished with an entire service. Mrs. Waters had a liking for cold clam broth, and as it was now set before her, she found less difficulty in addressing her husband in amity.

"I see by the papers, Mr. Waters," she said, "that you have recently laid yourself open to the charge of matrimony. It is a subject to which, from time to time, I myself have given attention, and I am sure your impressions could not fail to be of interest."

"One of the first things that struck me," he replied, "was the vast number of theories I entertained concerning the holy state, and every one of them totally erroneous."

"For instance?"

"For instance—may I give you some of this cold salmon?—one is accustomed to regard the matter in the light of a Great Step. Now, nothing, I find, is more fallacious. Granting the initial step of falling in love—you don't care for mayonnaise?—the Great Step becomes a mere date—a link in the chain."

Conscious that she had fallen into the crudity he indicated, she said, hastily: "You speak for your own sex, I take it?"

"Yes, I think I do," he answered, "for the situation, speaking generally, is more crucial for a woman."

"Because," she murmured, looking with meaning over the rim of her champagne glass, "because a woman rarely makes a man she loves unhappy, at least without intention."

"Yes," said Mr. Waters, cordially

adopting a thought so thoroughly in harmony with his own; "whereas, a man, with the best intentions in the world, may hurt a woman considerably, without ever guessing it."

Mrs. Waters prepared herself to point out to him that he would not have far to go for a practical example, but his eloquence swept on. (Mr. Waters was a lawyer.)

"For," he continued, noting with approval the perfection of the boned grouse that was placed before him, "as I look at it, there is a very debatable piece of ground before a couple such as we have in mind. Two people fall in love—nothing very extraordinary in that—and as we suppose them intelligent beings, they soon grow to have an accurate but theoretic knowledge of each other's characters. But the period during which this knowledge is being turned into the practical coinage of everyday life, while the inspiration of sentiment is becoming the habit of intimacy, is a time indeed fraught with danger. And, as we were saying, it is the man who finds it the most dangerous. The pitfalls for his feet are legion. In the first place, the public nature of the institution of matrimony forces him to acquire a manner for the public. Now, your mere male is a very bad hand at living up to such a demand as that, and his conception of the part is apt to be that of one who goes about exclaiming: 'Behold, I am the owner of a valuable chattel.' In the second place—"

And Mrs. Waters heard him go on to enumerate the very list of her charges against him.

She could not allow him to make such an exhibition, and before it had gone further she felt this was an excellent opportunity to point out to him how high a standard she had set on that very debatable ground of which he spoke so glibly. But even as she opened her mouth to speak, he fixed his eyes on hers and proceeded:

"Now, I must admit, Edna, that I had rather looked forward with alarm to this period, especially to-day.

You're tired—" she looked furtively in the glass—"and I'm pretty well beat. Traveling is fussy work at the best of times, and though I know you are too sensible to be over-sensitive, still I can imagine that I might easily have done something that would have got on your nerves. But now I feel quite easy." And having attained so enviable a state of mind, Mr. Waters's attention shifted to the galantine.

Mrs. Waters leaned her head back on the cushions and closed her eyes. All hope had left her. She felt the worst had arrived. *Easy*—he felt *easy*. The word vibrated within her. She had succeeded in quieting her nerves in order to talk the matter over with him, but now she was lost in a jangle and confusion. She looked at him beneath her half-closed lids and saw in fancy the man she had imagined him to be—a man with brilliance and tact in place of this fortuitous forensic and painstaking density.

In justice to her own feelings, food now became out of the question. Galantine, tomatoes *farcies* with caviare, *bar-le-duc* and iced pineapple passed in a rejected succession. The two men came in and took away the dishes. Waters stretched himself luxuriously and lighted a cigar, in defiance of the company's rule.

"I feel a thousand times better," he said. "Twelve hours from now we shall be in Echo Valley."

Mrs. Waters started. It was quite true. Twelve hours from then they would still be repeating this miserable farce, and twelve hours from then again. She crossed her arms, repressing a shudder.

"Where are we now?" she asked.

"We can't be far from Washington," answered Mr. Waters, and was thereupon so ill-advised as to attempt a little of what is known as "general conversation." But, although he made a brave start, his inspiration appeared to be fitful, and after a strenuous effort he came to a dead stop.

During all this time his wife had been incapable of attention, although

the necessity of self-expression was hurrying her toward speech that would open his eyes to the gulf between them.

A few minutes of the rhythm of the train, while the first irregular lights of the suburbs of Washington came flashing by, and then she heard herself beginning: "Adam, you must help me. Something is wrong. I know I exaggerate, but I am very tired—perhaps you will think oversensitive—but—" she was doing her best to be just—"we must both make allowances. I—" She looked up.

Adam was asleep.

She rose and pushed open the door of the compartment. The train was almost at a standstill.

"Washington!" cried the porter.

Fresh air came to her through the open door, and she moved toward it. She stepped on to the platform, and, walking to the end of the train, stood and watched the hurrying stream of passengers for how many minutes she could not have told. Suddenly the car at her elbow began slipping past. The porter, step in hand, gesticulated wildly; but she only shook her head.

The red eyes on the rear platform were soon all that could be seen of the southbound Echo Valley Express.

It was late in the morning when Mrs. Waters awoke at the Langham Hotel in Washington, and looked forward to a recuperative day in bed with great satisfaction. First, however, drawing to her a sheet of the hotel paper, she indited the following:

DEAR ADAM :

There is a very debatable piece of ground—

Somehow—never mind through whose fault—we reached it yesterday, and somehow, too, I did not get safely over. As a consequence, I am waiting here. What I say accounts for that, doesn't it?

The rest I may safely leave to you.

Affectionately always,

E. W.

She felt that this note, if a trifle enigmatic, would at the same time reveal to her husband the error of his ways and show him how easy and

pleasant his return to favor would be made. This done, she returned to bed and to a perusal of copies of those magazines she had spurned the day before.

The next morning, very much refreshed, she might have been observed sitting behind a stand of palms in the dining-room of the hotel. A golden rod of the April sunlight fell on the table. The menu was propped against the carafe on one side and a time-table on the other. Mrs. Waters was at that moment absorbed in ordering breakfast, the first time she had ever had an opportunity of doing so for herself. It was a matter, therefore, to which she was giving her whole soul, and presently the paraphernalia of an ideal light meal for a Spring morning were set before her.

A day among the parks of Washington seemed demanded by her sense of dramatic propriety, so, having purchased a white veil and a copy of Hazlitt's Essays, she proceeded to the grounds of the Smithsonian Institute. There is a peculiarly favored spot in this park where the near foreground is composed of a fountain, a pool covered with Egyptian lotus; and a quarter of a mile of slope of lawn edged with beeches constitutes the middle distance. Over the green tops of these rises the whole stretch of Washington. Mrs. Waters ensconced herself on a bench before the fountain, let her eyes rest on the flaming beds of crocuses set in the lawn, then on the Capitol to one side and the Monument to the other. Some children were racing along the asphalt walk. Mrs. Waters blinked her eyes in the sun and found life very good.

A little later she hailed an open carriage driven by an antiquated darkey, and visited that depository of American taste, good and otherwise, the Congressional Library; then lunched in the Library restaurant, finishing in time to catch the Mount Vernon trolley. She was whirled away in the open car over the Potomac and into Virginia; for an hour watched the river below the yellow

mist of budding trees at Mount Vernon, and returned to the hotel in time for dinner. A letter was handed to her; she had expected a telegram. It read as follows:

DEAR EDNA:

I thought we decided Washington was too tourist-ridden.

Without the authority of your closing words I could scarcely have allowed myself to have had such a good time as fell to my lot. Beginning at the beginning, you really missed a great deal by not alighting at the station with me and witnessing the effect produced on the populace by your pair of chestnuts, which looked ripping, if a trifle wicked, in the lead.

Timpson had managed to get down ahead of us by fast freight, and was suspended, like Mahomet's coffin, from the leader's bridle. I took a circuitous route out of the village in order to avoid comment on the solitary condition of the box seat.

About three o'clock this afternoon I came on a handsome young gentleman leading a horse that appeared to have gone lame. I made him get up, and told one of the men to lead the animal to the gentleman's house, about two miles further along. We got talking, and on hearing that I proposed to put up at the local hotel, my friend said it was a vile hole, and wouldn't hear of it, and that I was to stop with his people. Accordingly, I drove the break up the avenue of a regular old-fashioned manor, and we were greeted by the father, another son and four of the prettiest girls you could find in a day's journey. They were, I need not say, hospitality itself. Your letter was brought to me from the post-office about five. After supper we played polo like mad on bicycles, among the syringa bushes, and then, it being distinctly warm and the sun just setting, we trooped down, girls and all, to a pool in the river for a swim. Afterward a mint julep—the real article; this to you, and so to bed.

Mr. Waters was a regular correspondent. The next day at luncheon his wife received the following:

To-day I reached Echo Valley. When I got to the house I found the table piled with roses and lilacs, and a stack almost as high of cards and invitations. Among them was a note from Charlie Rawlings saying that they were giving a dance at the Hunt Club that night, and you and I

were to lead. After dinner I got into my pink and went over to the inn, where the festivities were in full swing. They were grieved to hear the journey had knocked you out so completely; said they had been afraid it might do so and had considered postponing the ball, and finally insisted that I should stay in your place, if only for a little while. Accordingly, I took a hand, dancing with pretty little Mrs. Ripley. The cotillion, with elaborate figures and favors, was just enough on the rowdydow order to suit the occasion. I have never tasted better champagne. I told everyone that instead of spending the week here we leave at once and start "driving down to meet the Spring," as I remember you said. It should be now in full blast in South Carolina. Good-night. Ever yours,

A.

And another letter was enclosed:

MY DEAR DAUGHTER:

I was perfectly thrilled by the account Adam sent me of your gaiety. I know how well you must have appeared and how much you must have enjoyed it. Didn't the scarlet hat become you? I say "your gaiety," though, poor dear, you seem to have missed part on account of that dreadful journey. However, I suppose you must have come in for some of it. I hope, particularly, you saw something of the charming young Louisianians just released from the Mardi Gras, who were staying with the Larkins. They seem to have "made things hum." It was so nice in Adam to manage to have your pair sent down in time to meet you. Get him to write often until you are better. I have always said a satisfactory honeymoon, a satisfactory marriage. Dora's child looks, etc.

Thus, day by day, did the pile of letters on Mrs. Waters's table at the hotel increase.

On the nineteenth of the month she received the final letter of the series, the last few lines of which read:

You remember we decided to be back in New York on the 20th. I leave, therefore, to-morrow. My train arrives in Washington at 1.03.

Mrs. Waters looked at her watch. It was already twelve o'clock. She sprang to the bell and rang it with such vigor that not one but three bellboys appeared, whom she sever-

ally despatched for the correct time, a porter, a cab and a time-table. Her treatment of these messengers was a mixture of extreme impatience and lavish expenditure of small change. By their united efforts she arrived at the station twenty minutes ahead of time.

As the train pulled in, her husband was standing on the step. A moment later the porter closed the door of the compartment, and they were alone.

"I have a letter from your mother," said Mr. Waters, drawing it from his waistcoat pocket. "She says, strangely enough, that a honeymoon generally serves to show two people whether it is possible they can see too much of each other, or whether, under ideal conditions, they can really be happy together. At least, Edna, we have avoided the former danger."

"Mamma is quite right," began Mrs. Waters, with a brave effort to imitate his detached manner; "and if a successful honeymoon is one that shows people they cannot be happy apart—oh, Adam, I don't know anything about ideal conditions and being together, but I have found out how wretched I can be without you, and—" The rest of a sentence that bade fair to be interesting she found herself forced to confide to the lapel of her husband's coat.

A second later, however, she raised her head and said, with a faint gleam in her eye:

"But it *was* dull of you to go to sleep."

"Perhaps it may be a satisfaction to you," said Mr. Waters, "to know I have made up for it. It doesn't seem to me that I have closed my eyes since."



FOG IN THE CITY

IT creeps upon us softlier than snow,
Obtrudes itself, insinuates its white
And vapory drift until like late twilight
The high noon seems, around, above, below.
Through the thick veil the sudden gas-jets glow
Faintly, as if they fain would sink from sight;
And hark, their notes of warning and affright
Shrilly afar the dolorous whistles blow!

The languid water laps about the quays,
And here and there a solitary mast
Rifts like a spectral finger the wan gloom.
God pity those upon the broad, blind seas!
To-night how many a one will sail his last,
Driving e'en now, undreaming, upon doom!

CLINTON SCOLLARD.



SLOW ABOUT IT

OLD GENTLEMAN—So I've caught you kissing my daughter, have I?
YOUNG MAN—Yes, at last.

THE STUDY OF THE STRANGE

By Helene Hicks

THE Woman Who Was at Home inclined her graceful head toward the Visitor. Her eyes held a puzzled smile.

"And you have put yourself out to call upon me, you who are so sought after, a woman of many engagements, merely to let me know that you know?"

Her voice was a ripple of tender melody, and the Visitor thought it was a voice to which a man might love to listen, especially if it were forbidden to him.

"Why do you do it?" the Visitor asked, nervously, bending forward and holding out one slim hand, a sensitive hand, quivering within its sheath of kid. "You are fair, sweet-faced, graceful—why do you win away other women's husbands? Surely you could get someone to marry you and become a wife yourself?"

"In which case somebody else would take away *my* husband. Is that a consummation devoutly to be desired?"

"But why, if you can hold another woman's husband, should you not hold your own?"

"The game would lack zest."

"I suppose you are wondering why I am here?" asked the Visitor.

"It does not seem exactly like you to have come. That is, not like the woman I thought you were from what I have heard."

"Then you have heard of me? How?" in some surprise.

"From Him." The Woman Who Was at Home regarded the other keenly, but the latter's calm, high-bred face maintained its serenity.

"Of course," said the Visitor; "I suppose you spoke of me because I write things for the critics to poke fun at. If a woman in our set wants to be talked about she has to do something artistic, or get mixed up in a scandal. In either event she soars into immediate notoriety." The speaker sighed ironically. "Sometimes I wish that I had chosen the path of scandal; it would have been so interesting, and much easier than trickling ink. In that event I might have written entertaining stories from my own experience, without the necessity of forcing myself in here, just to see what you are like."

The Woman Who Was at Home threw her head back suddenly.

"Do you mean to tell me that you came here to-day to study me?—that your only interest arises from a passion for character analysis?"

"I know I am unpardonable, but it is better to be truthful than afraid. Did you think I sought you from charitable motives? When you were pointed out to me, and I heard the delicious and very naughty scandal concerning you and the man who—what shall we say?—befriends you, I resolved to look you up and have a chat, if you proved to be get-at-able, and discover how you are different from the women I know, and why you are content to remain in—the underworld."

The Woman Who Was at Home had gentle eyes, but they could blaze on provocation, and they were afire now.

"You want to know how I am different," she flashed forth. "I

will tell you: Because I am a creature of flesh and blood, with a heart and yearnings and emotions. You asked, a few minutes ago, why I did not marry; because I would scorn to belong to a man I could not care for. I worked, slaved for years, in spite of the fact—which you so kindly acknowledge—that I am as fair as the women of your set. Do you think I had no opportunities of marrying? You and your sort would have taken one of them, suppressed your impulses and climbed to the top that you might peer down superciliously upon women who are human.

“When I first met and fell in love with the man who, as you say, befriends me, do you think it was a pleasant thought to me that he had a wife, a young, beautiful woman, whose heart might break at his perfidy?—for I thought that all women could suffer. Do you suppose that I wanted to care for him? Don’t you believe that I struggled against my love, and against him? But circumstances were too strong for me. I fell ill, and he did befriend me indeed. When I recovered I owed him much, and, as you may know, he is the sort of man that demands a return. And so it came about that I am what I am. Until to-day my conscience has never ceased from stinging. I have felt like a traitor to my sex.

“Then you come to me, and I fear many things, but you say you know all, and merely want to study me from a literary point of view; are planning to make capital of the situation; to write the history of your husband’s perfidy, my love——”

“Stop!” cried the Visitor, and she had risen, her eyes expanding fearfully. “What did you say about my husband?”

The other woman laughed, with a gleam of cruel little white teeth.

“He told me that you did not care; that you were a mixture of fads and fancies, with an ambition to outfrock all others. I did not believe him. I thought, being a man, he could not understand you, but I see he was right.”

The Visitor appeared not to have heard.

“This man—the man who befriends you—who is he?”

“Why, you know. You said you knew,” the last doubtfully.

“Is he—is he——?”

“He is your husband,” sharply. “You said someone pointed me out to you and told you all.”

“They told me that you were—were—the friend of a well-known man-about-town. There were no names mentioned. My husband is not that sort. How dare you suggest such a thing?”

The Woman Who Was at Home dropped her head.

“Forgive me,” she murmured.

A silence fraught with mental struggle drifted between them, riven at length by the Visitor.

“You have made some strictures against the women of my set,” she said. “Hereafter, I trust you will grant that some of us, at least, have courage. It is small wonder that you thought me heartless in seeking you, under the circumstances. Verily I have stumbled upon a powerful climax, and quite true to life, but I believe I shall drop literature; the study of real life is so exhausting. Pardon my trespassing on your time. Good afternoon.”

There were tears in the eyes of the Woman Who Was at Home, for the Visitor’s last word had been like a sob.



A GENTLE HINT

JIM DASH—You look sweet enough to kiss in that dress.
MISS BUDD—I have nothing but your word for it.

TWO OF A KIND

By Douglas Dunne

SCENE—*The interior of a hansom cab.*

THE LADY—This is a great lark! I always think a hansom is so delightfully improper.

THE MAN—It's jolly to get you off alone for a while. We see so little of each other in society! I'd like to chuck it all and steal you!

THE LADY—What an idea!

THE MAN—Say for a little trip across.

THE LADY—What fun it would seem! Quite like the old days.

THE MAN—Don't talk as if you were an old woman, Nellie. It jars me.

THE LADY—But sometimes one feels oh, so old, Phil! When I think of the time when we were engaged—

THE MAN—Why, it was only five years ago!

THE LADY—I thought you had forgotten.

THE MAN—Hush! don't talk like that. It makes me feel—

THE LADY—If all that has happened could be blotted out—if we could go back—to the April days!

THE MAN—You sentimental little woman! Do you mean all that? We can't change things, you know—

THE LADY—No. Then there is Jack!

THE MAN—Yes; of course.

THE LADY—Why do we outlive our romance? It's all that keeps life rose-color!

THE MAN—But life has its duties—its responsibilities—

THE LADY—There is a certain consolation in knowing that one has tried, but it doesn't bring back the Spring-time to be simply conscious of our rectitude—

THE MAN—Sometimes I wish—
THE LADY—Don't—don't! I've always depended on you so and looked up to you. If you fail me—

THE MAN—But you are getting so blue and morbid! I wish I could take you away from it all!

THE LADY—Do you recollect the place we used to drive to for dinner, with rose bushes all about the tables—?

THE MAN—And caterpillars in the cream—

THE LADY—But we thought it fun!

THE MAN—The world was all in bloom then!

THE LADY—Doubtless we shouldn't like the dinner now. We've outgrown it, I'm afraid.

THE MAN—Suppose we play we're back again in the old times—

THE LADY—And engaged!

THE MAN—And find the roses and the—

THE LADY—Caterpillars?

THE MAN—And dinner.

THE LADY—We'd surely be seen, and people—

THE MAN—What of it? It's our own affair—

THE LADY—People would talk about us.

THE MAN—Ha! ha! ha!

THE LADY—Then you forget Jack. It makes him furious to dine alone.

THE MAN—It will do him good for once.

THE LADY—Oh! Oh! How can you?

THE MAN—Jack monopolizes you! Where do I come in?

THE LADY—Don't talk that way, Phil, or—or I shall be sorry we met to-day!

THE MAN—It was a lucky chance!

THE LADY—It wasn't a chance. I planned it!

THE MAN—You darling!

THE LADY—Hush! The driver will hear you!

THE MAN—Why, one would think—

THE LADY—But it looks so odd—

THE MAN—You see, it is you who have outgrown romance. How did you manage it to-day? Did Jack suspect?

THE LADY—Not a bit. I'd never have been able to get away. He was asleep in the library—

THE MAN—Yes?

THE LADY—I slipped on a coat and told the maid to say I had gone shopping. Then down town in a cable car—I guessed the place you lunched—and walked into the dining-room. What did you think when you saw me?

THE MAN—I thought something had happened—that he—

THE LADY—I knew you would, so I smiled, just to let you know that everything was all right.

THE MAN—Then I thought, "By Jove! I'll have a chance for a word with Nell alone!" This round of teas and dinners makes a fellow feel like a stranger—

THE LADY—I knew it would surprise you.

THE MAN—I thought a drive would be a good idea. Aren't you glad you came?

THE LADY—Surely! After all—

THE MAN—Yes?

THE LADY—I suppose we are happy as most people—

THE MAN—In society? Yes. Will you come away with me?

THE LADY—Oh, I couldn't leave Jack!

THE MAN—Jack will be perfectly—

THE LADY—Wild when he wakes up and finds me gone!

THE MAN—We'll bring him back something. What does he like best?

THE LADY—Peanuts, I think. Ha! ha! ha!

THE MAN—Ha! ha! ha! Queer little beggar he is!

THE LADY—Don't talk of him like that, or I'll think you don't love him. Do you, Phil?

THE MAN—I respect him for his father's sake.

THE LADY—Just think—four years old to-morrow! Doesn't it make you feel ancient?

THE MAN—Not just here and now. I feel like a kid. Let us hunt up the old dinner place—

THE LADY—And forget Jack?

THE MAN—Forget everything—except—

THE LADY—What?

THE MAN—That we are together—

THE LADY—And married—

THE MAN—To each other!



THE COQUETTE

ERE dies the day, a twilight moon
Steals up the purple sky,
And to the vesper hours of June
She whispers low, "Good-bye!"

Then as she speeds the parting guest,
With love upon her face,
She falls upon the night's warm breast,
Close locked in his embrace.

CHARLES HANSON TOWNE.

THE ERRORS OF SOCIETY

By Rev. Braddin Hamilton

IT is always more pleasant to speak of the commendable characteristics of our fellow-beings than of their tendencies to err—so much safer for our own comfort to say “Well done!” to everybody and everything than to hold up the fabric of our society before the sun that its weak spots may be more easily seen; but, however unpleasant it may be, we are called upon in this life to condemn as well as commend, to censure as well as uphold. On this occasion my position is largely that of the critic, yet I hope, indeed, more that of the adviser.

That an error or a transgression committed by society is a very serious matter to our community, every thoughtful man quickly recognizes; serious, not only because it reflects on society itself but because of its influence on the millions who are ever ready to emulate society's movements and manners. Many of those who would be loudest in resenting this statement are among the most flexible imitators we have.

In the matter of calling attention to these faults, mistakes or transgressions, a beginning is not far to seek. It has become a very common—in fact, almost a prevailing—custom among the younger married people to be seen in public with persons other than their own life partners—women with other women's husbands, or preferably young boys or aged bachelors, and husbands with other men's wives, or preferably young ladies or widows. In fact, there is many a married woman who thinks it “not the smart thing” to be seen on parade with her own husband, and you can generally tell from her countenance whether it

is her own husband or somebody else's—or one of the chronic beaux. To illustrate this: I was standing in the Newport Casino grounds during the tennis tourney talking with a man who has spent many Summers there, when a woman passed, whom we both knew, walking with a man whom neither of us recognized. My friend remarked: “It is her husband, sure. Look at her sullen, dopy countenance. Always when I have talked with her she has been smiling and attractive.” The supposition concerning the stranger was soon proved correct by a chance-overheard introduction.

Many similar illustrations relating to the men could be given, but with all due regard for the women, I must say that *they* are the greatest transgressors in this Frenchy custom. A man belonging to one of the best families, socially, in New York told me last Winter that he was very pleased indeed to have men entertain his wife, because it was only by their attentions that he could hope to keep her in good humor. Another man, well known in Philadelphia, told a friend of mine that he had always to partially board two or three irresponsible men—“rounders,” as he called them—in order that his wife might be fully entertained. “I've got to do it,” he remarked, “or stand up against continuous nagging.” This man's complaint voices exactly what exists in a great many society homes in this country.

Another illustration shows where the man transgresses by retaliating. A man and his wife whom I know very well in New York planned a cruise on their yacht. We will call them Mr.

and Mrs. B. The inviting of a few friends was suggested by Mrs. B., to which Mr. B. gladly consented. Mrs. B. was to attend to that part, as Mr. B. was very busy arranging business and preparing the yacht for the trip. When the boat was ready to weigh anchor there appeared three men only—three chronic beaux, three “tanks,” as the husband put it, who were to entertain Mrs. B. while Mr. B. was enjoying the company of his yacht's crew or kept busy with the commissary department. However, the trip was made, Mr. B. making the best of it. A year afterward another cruise was spoken of, and Mr. B. said: “Now, you invite your friends and I will invite mine.” Mrs. B. took the hint and invited a man and his very homely wife, two “rounders” and a very ancient young lady. Mr. B. was not perturbed, but invited a man and two very good-looking ladies utterly unknown to Mrs. B. The yacht steamed away, and about the third day out Mrs. B. mutinied, declaring those “creatures,” meaning her husband's guests, must get off at the first port. After several days of very bad feeling, not all caused by *mal de mer*, the good-looking ladies got off at the first port, Mr. B. got off at the second port, and Mrs. B. got off at the third port. Then the captain and the crew took the boat home.

These few incidents indicate to us the fact that the wives of society feel themselves privileged to do what they will not tolerate in their husbands. The inward character of Mr. B.'s good-looking ladies was just as good as the inward character of Mrs. B.'s three “rounders”—any person who got half a glimpse at the faces of both parties would be convinced of that. Hence the mischief that can be covered up by the mantle of custom. Of course I have no sympathy with such a custom, nor with any of its results, but I have to say that when a man and a woman get married, so soon as they arrive at the conclusion that they have equal rights and privileges in life, so soon will they have arrived at a stage where happiness is possible.

In such circumstances as those outlined we see a few of the reasons why divorces and home-wrecking occur in some of society's households. There are cases where a divorce is the only solution, as every just person knows, and the one to blame is generally the one who starts the tricks; but the present practice of divorce is certainly one of the worst stains on American society.

Divorces occur in middle and low life very frequently, but that is where they are expected. The divorce laws in nearly all the States were originally adapted specially to protect the poor and the unfortunate. If a woman had a worthless, vicious husband to support, or a man had a drunken, unfaithful wife, the laws offered relief; but a divorce in society is something very different. Ninety-five per cent. of the divorces in society are pre-arranged. That is, the parties have their plans made out as to what they are going to do matrially when they procure the decree. In ninety per cent. of the cases they remarry—and marry the very persons the gossips said they would. Many of these cases come to light suddenly, but the majority of them live in the undercurrent even for years—a condition too horrible to think of—a man with a wife, and probably children, with hatred in his heart every time he looks at them because they are an obstacle in his way. They, together with the strong arm of the law, will not allow him to carry out his selfish ends—and, probably, all the while he is whispering poison into the ear of some simple-minded woman; probably furnishing her with money and helping her to plan the wrecking of her *own* home; advising her to disgrace her husband and throw her children out on the cold charities of the world, to be taken charge of by legal guardians and other sharks, who have no interest in them save only for what may be gotten of them; or he may be planning with some miserable, common creature who has no home and wants shelter—no matter how it comes to her—

who listens anxiously to his plans, and awaits the result of his shameful plot. On the other hand, we are obliged to witness the spectacle of a woman laying plans for a new husband. She is generally a woman who has not been born into society, but who has married into it by reason of her good looks. She is linked to a man who, probably, has not much to commend him except his money, but who is kind-hearted and worships her. She schemes to get hold of a good slice of his property, and when she is sure she cannot get any more, her plans begin for a wrecking of the home and a separation from the victim. The end in these cases comes about much more speedily than in the case of a man, as a bad, designing woman is much more daring than a bad man. She will take chances that he would not risk; she will stoop below the conception of the ordinary mind to carry her purpose, and the unfortunate husband, like any wise man, when he finds he has an evil woman, considers the quickest way to get rid of her generally the safest. He agrees to her financial demands and lets her go. He has a little money left—she does not get it quite all—and he must get rid of her soon, or she will wreck him mentally and physically. The divorce decree is the only visible seal set on the whole proceeding. Or, again, we have the spectacle of a woman straining every nerve to work up a divorce from a man after she has been the means of reducing him to poverty. This one generally has some aged financier arranged with, or in contemplation. Thus the divorce mill grinds on.

But I am pleased to see that divorcees have not the same footing in society that they had five years ago. Their standing is decidedly shaken—except it is a relative or special friend they are dealing with, their treatment is very doubtful and their movements are stimulated by audacity rather than by confidence. It is a good thing that society shows its disapproval in these cases, because this is the only antidote to divorce we have

in this country—"society's snub." The pulpit or the press does not worry the transgressors much, as the former they never go near, and the censure of the latter many of them mistake for popularity; but society's "deadly cut" or its "frigid bow" seems to be more than even the most brazen of them can stand up against.

The dark blots that divorce makes in society are too easily seen and too sad to write much about, so I will give only a few incidents of the absurd and humiliating positions in which people may be placed: I once occupied a seat on the grand-stand at the Newport Casino during a tennis match. After I had been in my seat a short time, a man I knew, once divorced, but remarried, came in with his new wife and occupied the two seats on my left, and a few moments later the woman from whom he had been divorced, and who had also remarried, came in with *her* new husband and sat directly on my right. Whether the ticket agent arranged this for a joke I am not prepared to say, but all went well until I grew tired of the game and got up, leaving the four in a straight row, which made an interesting picture for a few moments. The four soon realized, however, what people were staring and smiling at, and, looking daggers at one another, immediately rose and disappeared in the crowd. The incident amused the lads and misses very much.

A lady I know very well in New York, who was giving a dinner-party, told me she always dreaded the arranging of her guests at her tables, lest she put people together whom the "law had set apart," as she put it. "It would be perfectly dreadful to seat a gentleman beside a lady to whom he is paying alimony."

Again, the acknowledged humiliation of divorce even among children. Three young girls, playmates, just getting acquainted, sat on the sand at Bailey's Beach at Newport. We will call them Alice, Edith, and Mary. Alice said to Edith, "Has your mother been divorced?" Edith re-

plied, "Yes." Alice said, "So has mine," and both together they asked Mary if her mother had been divorced. Mary answered, "No." Alice and Edith exclaimed, "Oh, isn't that too bad—because if Mary's mother had been divorced we would all have been in the same box, and she couldn't snub us!"

Another reprehensible custom that appears to exist to some little degree is that of married men sending flowers to other men's wives. Of course, if they are relatives it may be excusable; but respectable, thoughtful men should consider how sensitive and subject to wrong impressions women are generally. A man often turns a woman's head and makes her dissatisfied with her lot by just such little material compliments, when he has no intention of doing any such serious thing, and would be deeply grieved if he found he had upset a friend's happiness, or made mischief in some good man's home. Therefore it is a good custom to avoid.

Another of society's most recent, and most dangerous evils, arises from the introduction of petty gambling at cards, chiefly at bridge whist. It is believed that many of the good-hearted, well-meaning matrons, in their anxiety to entertain, do not realize what a degrading, vicious habit they are bringing into their homes. Gambling is gambling, no matter who hopes to be the winner, and the human being has not yet been born who can gamble and not suffer some injury. Nor has there ever been a speaker or a writer who could frame language that would fully picture to the human mind the treacherous meanness of gambling. To give only an outline of its evil effect on the society of France and England within the past hundred years would occupy volumes. It has broken up some of society's best family estates, and wrecked many families of noble lineage. It has driven young men with an Oxford or Cambridge education to be profligates and criminals. And we have no reason to suppose that society in this country is more able to resist its insidious influence.

No man who makes a few successful winnings ever forgets the experience, and even if he does not follow it up for the time being, if ever he gets into reduced circumstances, the cards are the first thing to which he will fly. The effects and results of society's petty gambling, with its encouragement to the young men, can only be imagined.

Many of the young men who have had a little experience, or who have to live on a limited income, are avoiding the game "bridge," as they know they are pretty sure to be "done up" by the chronic beaux, or by some of the women who are inveterate players. I heard a young widow call up, on a public telephone, very recently at a fashionable Summer resort, six young men before she could get one to accept for a "game of bridge."

Many of the aged bachelors, and some of the married society men, of New York and Newport are continuous gamblers, although they keep the fact pretty well under cover, even many of their own immediate friends being unaware of it; but places like Canfield's, in New York, and the handsome house on the corner of Bellevue avenue and Bath road, Newport, are not supported by "ten-cent players." The place I mention at Newport has been running over a quarter of a century, is always kept in good order, and bears an outwardly attractive appearance. It is safe to say that the butlers' and the coachmen's patronage would not go far toward bearing the heavy running expenses of this elegant place, and we may draw our conclusions as to who support it. It has a back entrance from the Casino.

Another idea that has of late years crept into society is one that I must regard as certainly a little below par. That is the idea of the male private secretary for women. Why not have a lady secretary or a lady-in-waiting, if you choose? We have very many young women and women of middle age thoroughly adapted to such a position, well born, well educated and well versed in matters social. The

idea of a family introducing one of its servants and putting him beside guests at the dinner table is something that is repulsive to most of us. A family came to Newport several years ago and brought a very aggressive private secretary, who afterward proved to be part negro, and who became decidedly obnoxious to all the friends of the family, being even jealous of attentions paid to the ladies of the house. So objectionable did he become that the family suffered many slights on account of his presence.

The recent tragic death of a young woman of good family, alone in her boudoir, with no one within reach but one of those male private secretaries—she had to die without a sincere kiss from any of her good little children or without a last fond stroke on the brow from her well-subdued husband—was an incident that ought to move even hearts of stone to pity; was an incident that revealed to this community a condition of things in an apparently model home, which was pitiable beyond any language to express. Let us hope that the male private secretary for our wives and daughters is soon to be a thing of the past.

I hope that the readers of this article will not conclude that these features of which I have been writing predominate in society. I do not think they do. They appear to me to be the spots and stains that mar an otherwise clear, clean background. They are most easily seen and most frequently discussed—hence the power of their evil influence. Some will tell you that the public press raises or lowers society according to the character of the persons the press notices, but this is true only indirectly. It is the actions of the leaders that make society. The press only relates these actions to the public, and it is the continuous, repeated notice of these actions that establishes in the minds of society or of the public what we call *custom*; hence, the grave responsibility of introducing an evil that time may establish. I am a great believer in the public press as a

check on society's evils, as there are many of the newly rich who would try almost anything were they not afraid of publicity and exposure.

It is a well-known fact that the brains of society at the present time are largely possessed by the women. The chronic beaux and society's middle-aged bachelors are *no good*, generally. All they seem to possess are a badly battered physique, poor clothing and a strong thirst. The bright, worthy young men seem to be too deeply engrossed in business to give society much attention. I was standing talking with a prominent railroad magnate at the Horse Show at Newport this Summer, when one of the principal society men passed with such a belated, woe-begone appearance that the magnate was prompted, probably through pity, to ask me who he was. When I told him, he said: "Oh, I have often seen that name in society news. I am astonished. I am sure that if that fellow came to me looking like that, and applied to me for a position as a brakeman on a freight train, I should refuse him. He looks as if his ambition, brains and physique were all gone, if he ever had any." Yet these are the men the society women are obliged to rely on for assistance in their entertaining—which accounts for the humiliating character of many of society's entertainments—swine parties, kat-bote "teas," mussing up the drawing-room with vegetables, etc.

Why should we not be able to originate games, as they have done in other countries—and no country has more brains than we—games like golf, tennis and polo, that take a lasting hold of the better classes of people and on the general public? Golf has been going four hundred years, and still flourishes. In England nearly all the clergymen are in society, being a class, above all others, who love fun and amusements, and who have made a study of morals and methods of enjoying life without sinning against one's self and mankind. This is probably one of the reasons why society in England is more

stable, and its pastimes more rational and satisfying than here. The clergy in this country who are in society are the exception; therefore, when they, as a class, begin to advise society, society, of course, smiles at their ignorance of the subject; and when they attempt to check society's evils, they go at it so indiscreetly, with hammer and tongs, and make such sweeping assertions and condemnations, that the result is failure. It will be better for both society and the Church in this country when more gentlemen's sons enter the ministry; then the Church and good society will be part and parcel of each other.

Let us say, then, in conclusion, that the greatest need of society at the present time is better leadership—

that of men and women who are capable of suggesting and planning society's amusements; men and women of education, culture and refinement, who have brains enough to think out results before suggesting amusements, and sufficient force of character to stand by their ideas; men and women who have more manly and womanly ideas of what constitutes a good time—of the distinction between what is elevating and what is degrading to the human nature—and who are big-hearted and broad-minded lovers of mankind rather than lovers of notoriety. In short, those who are leaders, not for *personal gain*, but for the pleasure of entertaining, ennobling, and placing on a loftier basis the whole body of our good society.



EGOTISM

COULD ye speed through space as the comets sweep,
 In the awful void of the open deep,
 As long as time shall be,
 'Mid swarms and storms of stars, that swirl
 And drift like snowflakes set awhirl
 For all eternity,
 Though a million æons came and fled,
 And a myriad more, and still ye sped,
 An end ye would not see.

Beyond the lume of the Milky Way,
 Where suns flash faint, and fade away,
 Lost in an alien sky,
 Infinite stars flung far in space
 Breed pygmy men, race after race,
 That breathe for a trice—and die.
 Yet many a man e'er he turn to clay
 Will swagger and lift his head and say—
 "Behold me: I am I!"

FRANCIS JAMES MACBEATH.



HOPEFUL

BESSIE—Have they renewed their engagement?

MAUDE—No; but he seems hopeful. He says they have renewed their old quarrel.

ON THE STAIRS

By Carolyn Wells

THE river steamer grated perseveringly against the dock and finally, with an air of accomplishment, settled into position. Ropes creaked, the gangplank was banged into place and then the mass of journey-ending humanity struggled ashore.

The last of all to leave the saloon, a man and a woman, unconsciously in step, faced each other down the opposite short flights, and stood side by side at the top of the main staircase.

They were total strangers to each other, but, impressed by the absolute perfection of her costume, manner and bearing, he looked at her critically, though unconscious of the act, and she, vaguely appreciative, scanned him.

As their eyes met each felt an instant and perfect comprehension of the other's nature, and their responsive smiles had no trace of wonder in them.

"I think I have waited for you all my life," said he, and his tone was grave.

"No, only half your life," said she, glancing at the short flight of brass-bound stairs he had just descended; "the rest of this staircase is our life, and we will live it together."

"Yes," he said, readily falling in with her whimsey, and they descended one step. "Now our life is just beginning. I am a poet, a dreamer and a psychologist—son of the great god Pan and the Cumæan Sibyl. I have wonderful powers of perception, and I know, as I watch you, that you are the embodiment of all I admire in woman."

"I am an artist and a romanticist; the daughter of Omar Khayyám and

Delilah. I believe in affinities, and I feel sure you are mine."

"We are of the cognoscenti. We will take another step."

On the next stair she said:

"What made you speak to me?"

"Kismet. Why did you respond?"

"Because I understood. It is only a question of compression of time. If we had met socially and rationally, we should have been attracted in the same way, but slowly."

"Yes, for you are beautiful and responsive."

"And you are large and kind. Have you a disposition?"

"Yes, a good one. And you?"

"Angelic."

"I was sure of it. And yet we have nothing to do with dispositions and temperaments. They are superficial and unimportant. I seem to know your very soul."

He grasped her hand, exclaiming: "Take the next step quickly. I love you!"

Simultaneously their feet touched the brass-bound stair, and she looked at him with full response in her beautiful eyes.

"Yes," she said, "I love you with a love that is like eternity. It had no beginning, it can have no end. This is our spangle of existence, and the love of our life is concentrated into this moment."

"You are perfect," he murmured, drawing closer to her. "Ours is indeed the very spirit of Love. It is a psychological reality. You are mine forever."

"Forever," she answered, and they stepped down once more.

"Will you always love me?" she said, with a sweet wistfulness.

"Always," he answered. "How can we doubt it, with a sympathy so perfect? It is more than sympathy, it is identity. We *are* each other."

"Yes. This is the climax."

"It is. But we must take the next step. Come."

"Ah, how the tension is relaxed! I love you—in a general, indifferent sort of way. And you?"

"I adore you, but I begin to feel that my mind is receiving impressions of other matters. I have a haunting sensation of having been bored."

"Yes, I know—that sense of having been cloyed with uninterrupted sweet-

ness. Step slowly, this is next to the last."

"And here, on this last stair, I bid you a calm and rational good-bye."

"Good-bye, and to the ends of our now separate lives we will share the memory of a lived romance."

Together they stepped from the last brassy stair to the floor of the lower deck, and the man heard a voice say to his companion: "Oh, here you are, dear!"

Then he turned away and went straight to his own carriage, which was awaiting him.



THE DREAM

THY presence lingered whilst I slept;
 The wings of brooding years
 Folded, and from my vision swept
 Mists of forgotten tears.

Then there was none save thou and I
 In all the paths of space;
 And through the moonlit mystery
 Again I knew thy face.

To-day thou art so near, so near,
 That time and absence seem
 But myths, because thou still wert dear
 One moment in a dream.

VIRGINIA WOODWARD CLOUD.



HERSELF TO BLAME

LENA—I didn't think you'd let a man kiss you on such short acquaintance.

MAUDE—Well, he thoroughly convinced me that it was all my own fault that I hadn't met him sooner.

DON JUAN*

By Richard Hovey

CANTO XVII

DON JUAN stood upon the quarter-deck—
I'm not quite certain “quarter-deck” is right,
And I dare say I'll get it in the neck
From the dear youths who teach me how to write;
But then it sounds so nautical—“quarter-deck!”
We *must* have local color; if not quite
Exact, why, many a name even critics venerate
Has been a worse sailor than I. At any rate,

On some kind of a deck Don Juan stood;
In these new-fangled steamers I'm not sure
That any of the good old words hold good—
Only the lurch and seasickness endure.
But Juan had sailed many seas, and could
Have passed through tempests with no qualms to cure,
Nor any loss of peace of mind, or diet.
However, at this time the sea was quiet.

It was a night Lorenzo might have praised
To Jessica, when those dear scamps sat purring
Of Dido and of Cressid, while they lazed
Under the stars and heard the low winds stirring,
And gurgled in each other's ears, and gazed
Into each other's eyes, like doves conferring,
Until that music broke upon their ears
That mingled with the music of the spheres—

That strain the world shall never hear again,
Nor cease to hear forever. Such a night
The quivering liner with its thousand men
Raced through, a goaded, maddened meteorite,
Across the vast of calm. There was not then
One cloud to blot the innumerable light
That made the still impeccable sky a splendor
Of armied worlds grand in supreme surrender.

* At the time of his death, in February, Mr. Hovey was engaged in writing for the SMART SET this poetical satire, “Don Juan—Canto XVII.” By reason of the fact that it was left unfinished, his widow and literary executors at first decided to withhold it from publication, but later reconsidered, and it is now presented for what it is—a fragment, interesting in itself, and still more interesting as the last notable work of the distinguished poet. In style, whimsicality and humor, its imitation of the original of Lord Byron is remarkable. Incidentally, it reveals a new side of Mr. Hovey's genius. If completed as planned, the canto would have contained many adroit thrusts at the social conditions of New York.—EDITOR.

Low in the North blazed sevenfold the Bear,
 Like outpost angels frontiered toward the Naught;
 Far southward on the sea-line rose afire
 The beacon of enormous Formalhaut;
 From East to West, from Rigel to Altair,
 The Milky Way arched like the Master's thought
 Of what He yet will raise in cosmic masonry
 To span the Void, and stud with stellar blazonry,

For all along that arch of dream there flew
 The pennons of the princes of the night,
 The guidons of that infinite review;
 Prone on the very waves outstretched, the might
 Of huge Orion heaved itself to view;
 And higher toward the Pole the yellow light
 Of Norse Capella signaled overseas
 To where, below the clustered Pleiades.

Aldebaran, a fiery heart, replied
 With flame that like a shout o'erleaped the expanse;
 And higher toward the zenith the sea pride
 Of Algol, the star-demon, flared askance;
 And higher still, in full midheaven enskied,
 Cassiopeia crowned the high advance
 And seemed to pause a moment on heaven's crest
 Ere she descended. Further in the West

The glory of Deneb made Cygnus kindle,
 And Vega, further north, whom sailors love,
 Serene and large, made starlets seem to spindle—
 Vega, the lady of Summer nights. Above
 There was no moon to make the star-host dwindle;
 No planets either—'twas the 30th of
 September, 1899; that night
 (See the ephemeris) there was none in sight.

But planets Juan did not know from stars;
 He only knew that under that far glory
 He felt a greatness more than loves or wars
 Could bring—and both had mingled with his story;
 Of both he knew the garlands and the scars
 (And of most other matters transitory);
 But here the shadow of the Eternal fell
 About his soul, which gatenead there to dwell.

The calm was in his heart as on the sea,
 The Lone wherein we voyage none knows whither;
 The sound of waters under the ship's lee
 Confused his senses in a pleasant blither
 And loosed his soul in dreamland. . . . But see!
 There, on the starboard bow, what light comes hither,
 Just under Vega? Is it a new star?
 Or some ship's light that hails us from afar?

Just then a fellow-passenger strolled up
 With "That's Fire Island. Well, the trip was short.
 To-morrow we shall be at Del's to sup.
 I wonder whether Dewey is in port.
 And Lipton—do you think he'll lift the Cup?
 Thank Fortune, we'll have news soon of some sort.
 I've such a next-day's thirst for information,
 I'd even be content to read *The Nation*.

"Do you think war's declared on the Boers yet?"
 And Juan sighed and wished it were—internally—
 And all his dreams dropped with his cigarette
 Over the ship's side. He was bored infernally,
 But covered with a smile his inward fret
 (His conscience wasn't so violent as to spurn a lie),
 And after some discussion of Fashoda
 Went to the smoking-room for Scotch and soda.

The fellow-passenger was a worthy man—
 A several-millions'-worth(y) man—had traveled
 Widely (once in his own yacht to Japan),
 And many knotty social coils unraveled;
 Knew just which colored ties were under ban;
 Caviled at all at which his set had caviled;
 And never had one notion in his cranium
 More his own than his florist's last geranium.

His father's name was Smith, and later Smythe;
 He was Van Smythe, completely Knickerbockered.
 His father had begun with spade and scythe;
 He, from his cradle, had been coaxed and cockered.
 His father had the wit to take his tithe
 (And wed a widow who was richly tochered),
 But never quite got into good society;
 He belonged to its most select variety.

He held within the hollow of his hand
 The World—in little—that's to say, a wallet;
 Gave midnight suppers delicately planned
 (In this he was assisted by his valet);
 Knew how to drive (and tie) a four-in-hand;
 Had wines that made a Cæsar of the palate;
 Owned everything there was on earth to own,
 And nothing that was really his alone—

Nothing of which his thought had been a part,
 To make it more than tatters caught on trees.
 Rugs, Chippendale, Johannisberger, Art—
 He paid for them, but never made them his.
 His dogs, perhaps, were nearest to his heart;
 But he had houses, horses, all there is,
 And, what was most of all to Juan's liking,
 A wife whose beauty was supremely striking.

She was a slight, red-headed, fetching type,
 With eyes like sealskin and a cheek like ermine,
 Soft, lush and deep; her lips were overripe,
 If anything—but who would dare determine?
 She fenced, rode, flirted, smoked—had hit the pipe,
 They say (what will not gossips say? the vermin!)—
 For Ellinor (her Christian name was Ellinor)
 Had twenty-seven different kinds of hell in her.

How many kinds of heaven I dare not say—
 The heavens that women have are so improper!
 And I am still determined that this lay
 Shall not at moral fences come a cropper.
 True, cardboard mottoes are not much my way;
 But, as Catullus says: “Who cares a copper?”
 I still maintain my purpose highly moral;
 As for my methods—well, we will not quarrel.

I stand with Shakespeare, not to speak of Solomon;
 My critics stand with Bowdler, Harlan, Comstock,
 And though that kind may look supremely solemn on
 Occasion, they're at bottom but a rum stock.
 A man may be a virtuous though a jolly man,
 And wise without that mummary that benumbs talk,
 That dull, pretentious, preternatural gravity
 These Tartuffles wear to cloak their own depravity.

These self-made bishops of the phallic crozier,
 Who roll their eyes up till they show the whites
 (Why isn't that an indecent exposure?)
 These ticklish gentlemen who make war on tights,
 Gloat on the coy shop windows of the hosier,
 And peep through their own window blinds o' nights
 To watch Susannah bare her dimpled knees,
 And then report the case to the police.

Susannah's story is quite Biblical,
 But Ellinor Van Smythe's is much more modest—
 Modern, I mean to say—but, after all,
 It's much the same. Their manners were the oddest.
 Our lives and gowns have a more decent fall,
 Though “modest” may too often mean but “bodiced.”
 But I know one or two whom these same bodices
 Alone can differentiate from goddesses.

And Ellinor Van Smythe in pre-Byzantian
 Days would have been as “noble and antique”
 (I leave out “nude” because it spoils the scansion)
 As the most natural and uncircumcised Greek.
 Indeed, right in New York, in her own mansion,
 All tailor-made and boned, 'twere far to seek
 A grace more lithe, free, undulant than hers
 Even in Olympus' half-clad roisterers.

The mockery in her look was not all mocking;
 'Twas half the caged thing's startle. Born a roamer,
 She found escape of soul in being shocking.
 Witty she was, and wicked; knew her Omar,
 Browning and Kipling—yet was no bluestocking.
 (By the way, what a curious misnomer!
 All the "bluestockings" ever I knew write
 Wore stockings of the most indecent white.)

When I say "wicked" I don't mean to say
 Wicked in any sense of reprobation;
 There was no malice mingled with her clay
 (Unless in the sly French signification);
 She was only wicked in that charming way
 That drives "good" women to exasperation,
 Because it puts them at a disadvantage.
 (Men won't take trouble in this complaisant age.)

But she was serious under her frivolity,
 And in her maddest moods a mild restraint
 Gave to her merriment a patrician quality
 As far from "sportiness" as from constraint.
 Her joyousness was not the least like jollity—
 St. Anthony had been ten times a saint
 Could he have seen this queen-rogue of Eve's daughters
 Pass like a sunbeam wantoning on the waters

And not have thrown his scourges in the Nile
 And whistled Heaven down the wind, to follow,
 And win perhaps the guerdon of her smile—
 For, after all, those dreams of his were hollow;
 He knew they had no substance all the while—
 You see St. Anthony was no Apollo,
 And, as for tempting him, why, pretty women
 Weren't so hard up for love as to take him in.

What, that lean, scrawny, knock-kneed, raw-boned lubber,
 Whose very fleas well-nigh gave up the ghost,
 A lady-killer? Why, 'twould take a scrubber
 Like Hercules to scrape him down, almost;
 And nothing less than burning india-rubber
 To clear the air! And all that for the boast
 Of conquering a Saint! No, not even vanity
 Could stomach such a satire on humanity.

Were there no gilded youth in Alexandria,
 No Alciphrons nor Alcibiades,
 To satisfy the taste for polyandria?
 I can't believe such fairy-tales as these;
 No, not if Rafael, Leonardo, Andrea
 And Michael Angelo combined should please
 To paint that dear old subject for the nones,
 And sanctify its lechery with its bones.

No, either all the painters and those crusty
 Old chroniclers were guying all the while,
 And Anthony was really young and lusty,
 And groomed and garbed the better to beguile;
 Or else those girls of his were dim and dusty
 Visions born of accumulated bile,
 Because the poor old man had satyriasis.
 (You take your choice, whichever way your bias is.)

Well, I'm not Anthony—thank God for that!
 Though he's in heaven, and I'm—where I expected.
 He's sitting with the angels, singing flat;
 And I'm in hell and not half so dejected
 As you'd suppose, considering "where I'm at."
 I'm rather glad that I was not elected
 And foreordained to heaven before earth's testing;
 I find that hell's so much more interesting.

In the First Canto and two hundredth stanza—
 If, gentle reader, you'll turn back to see
 How I began this famous old romanza,
 When I was something less than thirty-three
 And still as much on earth as Sancho Panza,
 Though not so certain that I was as he—
 You'll find I told the critics then (plague take 'em!)
 This poem should be Epic as they make 'em.

Twelve books—I've changed my mind for twenty-four;
 But that is neither here nor there—the Iliad
 'S my model now; if Virgil has no more
 Than twelve, that's Virgil's fault, not mine. I'll add
 Still more hereafter? That I should deplore,
 When books are Caponsacchi'd and Pompilia'd
 Out of all compass. Still, there is no bar at a
 Length like Ramáyana or Mahabhárata.

I promised, too, an episode in Hades,
 Without which no true Epic is complete.
 A journey through the Valley of the Shade is
 Undoubtedly the proper Epic feat—
 That hard-enameled country where no blade is,
 Nor any footprint of returning feet!
 You know Æneas said it, and Ulysses,
 In just such Epic poetry as this is.

But when I planned to write of those obscurities
 Where Dante says the temperature's at zero
 (On this point there's some conflict in authorities),
 I did not think myself to be the hero
 Of that part of my poem, nor confer at ease
 With such as Nimrod there, or Nap, or Nero.
 (Not much as Homer, Virgil, Dante show 'em—
 But still it gets the next world in my poem.)

But here I am, and here I'm like to stay,
 And I can save Don Juan this excursion
 By giving you a rough sketch by the way
 Of my own knowledge, and not mere assertion.
 Hell is not what it was in Homer's day;
 And if my picture prove a novel version
 Of that dread place too much ignored of late,
 Remember that Hell, too, is up-to-date.

I died, you know, for Greece—at Missolonghi.
 Much good it ever did the Greeks or me!
 It let me into ghostland by the wrong key.
 And for the Greeks, no doubt they think they're free,
 Like every other independent donkey
 Who grips the name and lets the substance be,
 Thinking his country is more free the smaller 'tis,
 And that the franchise really brings equalities.

That land is free where the inhabitants
 Are free; the rest is merely oratory.
 The trouble is that human history grants
 No glimpse of such a land in all its story.
 One slavery dies but by another's lance;
 And in the process many men get glory,
 But the vast millions only fresh disasters—
 Monarchs or mobs, 'tis but a change of masters.

Muscle was King once; now the King is Money.
 The form of government, the world's partition—
 These things are but the wax and not the honey;
 "The means whereby I live" is the condition
 Of freedom as of life. It is not funny
 To eat but by the other man's permission;
 And it makes little difference to the stoker
 If Thomas Platt be lord or Richard Croker.

But I, at least, was true to Freedom's cause
 Even to the death (let Southey say as much!),
 And, whether wise or foolish, let's not pause
 To wonder now; it had the lyric touch,
 And I'd not have it other than it was.
 But the next moment I was in the clutch
 Of something, of two Somethings, pulling, hauling me,
 Until I thought 'twas Scotch reviewers mauling me.

When I became a little more aware,
 And they became a little out of breath,
 I saw the Things that grappled with me were
 Too beautiful to be in thrall to Death,
 So that I trembled, seeing them so fair,
 And, like the air-drawn dagger of Macbeth,
 The terror of their immateriality
 Shuddered my soul, still wonted to mortality,

Till I remembered I was immaterial
 As well as they, and then I grew more bold
 And looked more closely at their forms ethereal.
 One was a Shape of Light, superb and cold,
 And one of Darkness, passionate and imperial,
 And both of Beauty. But—was I not told?—
 Sure, not my good and evil angels these? . . .
 Why, I—I thought the angels were all he's!

“Men have called women angels for so long
 ‘Tis natural they should call angels women,”
 I said; “but scholars know that that's all wrong.
 There may be she-gods in the faith of Rimmon,
 But not the Michaels of Hebraic song.
 As well imagine it was a persimmon
 Eve plucked in Eden, when it was an apple,
 As everybody knows who's been to chapel.

“Pray tell me, ladies, why you give the lie
 To all the grave Rabbinical traditions
 With such unblushing muliebrity!”
 Thereat they blushed, confirming my suspicions.
 “George,” said the Shape of Light, “pray tell me why
 We should not here, as on the earth, have missions?
 In the old days, of course, we had no chance to;
 But you must know, we spirits are advanced, too.”

“Men,” said the Darker Beauty, “can no longer
 Retain their old monopoly of the offices.
 The cause of feminism grows daily stronger.
 And though as guardian angels we're but novices,
 I hope you'll find us subtler, sweeter, younger
 Than any cloistered frump that lived in Clovis's
 Or Pepin's days, and knew no way to please men
 Better than Biddy has for her policemen.”

“Madam,” I said, “almost thou dost persuade me
 To be a feminist. And, ladies both,
 Since I have seen you, by the God that made me—”
 (The Shape of Light looked startled at the oath)
 “Since with your beauty you have both waylaid me—”
 (My fingers met the Dark One's, nothing loath)
 “Alike to Heaven and Hell more reconciled—”
 I trod here on the Light One's boot, and smiled.

That finished me. The Light One was a prude,
 And off she flew to Heaven in such a huff
 I thought her manner positively rude.
 Whereat my Evil Angel plucked my cuff
 And—well, what other course could be pursued?
 I had but her—and wasn't she enough?
 I don't complain—there was some compensation—
 But that is how they settled my damnation.

Hell (but it took some time to get to Hell,
 We had so much to say along the road)
 Rose at the last before us, dark and fell.
 Far off it lay—or squatted, like a toad—
 On the horizon. Like a sudden knell
 It tolled across the wastes where through we strode.
 Low, sinister and sinuous it crouched,
 As if it menaced more than it avouched.

But that was the outside; the old walls stood
 Much as they looked when first they were created;
 Æons on æons have their towers withstood,
 And only grown more sullen as they waited;
 But they that dwell therein have changed their mood;
 The inside is completely renovated;
 They speak of the old ways with an apology,
 And are quite up in modern criminology.

'Twas more poetical in times more pristine,
 Before Lombroso led them in new paths;
 It's cleaner now, and also more Philistine,
 The grim stones hid with plastered-over laths
 And hung with prints of Guidos and the Sistine,
 While Phlegethon is used for Turkish baths,
 Dis-piped and drained and turned into a dormitory,
 And all Hell has become one vast Reformatory.

Tartarus is a laboratory now,
 Gymnastics flourish in the meadows Stygian,
 The devils are all doctors studying how
 To bring their prisoners to true religion,
 And Lucifer, with spectacles on brow,
 Turned Dryasdust, and the whole whitewashed region
 A dull régime to make poor duffers holy—
 I prefer Italy and la Guiccioli.

Still, it is interesting here because
 There are such interesting people—lots!
 Cæsar, Petronius, Attila, Morgause,
 Nell Gwynn, Aspasia, Mary Queen of Scots,
 And more good company than I can pause
 To mention, have their numbers and their cots,
 And Heaven is much more boresome, so they say—
 A sort of middle-class Y. M. C. A.

Besides, this criminology's a fad;
 Nordau has killed it. Even now a faction
 O' the younger twentieth-century devils, glad
 Of any change, is threatening reaction.
 And after the carbolic we have had,
 Even brimstone would be welcome for olfaction.
 I even note some restlessness in Lucifer—
 He feels he's not the part—as well play crucifer!

But here we are—and here I am (at present)
 Number nine thousand million and nineteen.
 My photograph's been taken, looking pleasant,
 And filed with notes describing dress and mien;
 What moles I have, and where, and what malfeasant
 Mattoidal marks are on my person seen—
 Full measurements by the Bertillon system,
 And many other matters to assist 'em.

The only punishments that still remain
 Are those that fit the crime, Mikado-fashion;
 Each still pursues his vision, and in vain
 (Even after death persists the ruling passion);
 Midas must still heap useless gain on gain,
 And hapless love makes Romeo's cheek grow ashen;
 Napoleon still leads armies—to his ruin;
 And I continue still to write Don Juan.

Now if you ask me why I don't go on
 Where I left off, and finish up the story
 Of how the Duchess played the ghost for fun,
 And whether friendship grew more amatory
 In Lady Adeline and that other one—
 Who was so innocent and pinafore-y—
 What was her name?—well, anyhow, you see
 I forget what that story was to be.

Dying has put it all out of my head—
 You see it's quite an incident to die,
 And the excitement of it broke the thread
 Of what I had in mind to write. So I
 Must let dead cantos bury their own dead
 And write of what the public want to buy.
 Southey's forgotten; so is Castlereagh;
 But there are fools and scoundrels still to-day.

I'm just as well informed as a New Yorker
 Of Wall Street, Waldorf, Tammany, what-not;
 We've a brand-new kinetoscope—a corker—
 It's just as good as being on the spot;
 A ticker gives the latest price of pork or
 Of Atchison—or any other lot—
 And when we're bored with happenings infernal
 We read the extras of the *New York Journal*.

So I commence anew my song extemporary,
 And if you think it strange that I who died
 In '24, so soon become contemporary
 With you of '99, that's quite beside
 The question. Here we know not of things temporary—
 Past, future, present, all with us abide;
 In Hell a thousand years are as a day
 (It's also true if turned the other way).

We, being out of Time—but then you wouldn't
 Be able to understand me if I told you—
I couldn't when on earth (but I'm no student,
 And never was). . . . You see, Time doesn't enfold you;
You enfold Time. But really, it's imprudent
 To talk of metaphysics. Why, a cold dew
 Starts on my brow when I see Kant draw nearer. . . .
 Just ask Tom Davidson to make this clearer.



MISPLACED SWEETNESS

SHE was pouring at a tea that afternoon, and she looked unusually bewitching. He was sitting at her left, in a bower of palms that almost concealed him. He was holding one of her hands under cover of the table-cloth, while she tried to pour with the other.

She did not look at him as he talked, but he knew by her color and the little quiver of the hand he was holding that she heard everything he said.

“Dearest,” he murmured, as she sent one cup off without a spoon and another filled only with whipped cream, “dearest, if you don't mind my saying all this to you, just drop a spoon. Couldn't you manage it?”

A clatter of silver, and more color in the girl's face, as, in stooping to pick up the spoon, he kissed her hand. Spurred by this success, he went on: “Dearest, if—if you return it—that is, if you *love me*, you know, just put three lumps of sugar into the next cup you pour—‘y-e-s’ Or, if you don't, two, to spell ‘No.’”

One, two, three! The tiny cup was almost full, but in her haste to hide her confession she covered the three lumps hastily with chocolate and cream, and sent them off.

He asked his mother, as they drove home that night, if she had enjoyed herself.

“Ugh! No!” was her disgusted reply. “Such horrible stuff to drink as they gave one! Why, my cup was half full of sugar.”

M. S. HOLBROOK.



FOR A NEW SENSATION

ONE boon do I crave out of Fortune's great store,
 One bliss of the many that's doled out by Fate—
 'Tis not that some maid should be loving me more,
 'Tis not gift of wealth, I am happy to state;
 Not even that Fame come and crown me with bay,
 Nor curl from a head wreathed with sunshiny wisps;
 But ah, I've been craving for many a day
 A kith from the lipth of a maiden that lisps!

ROY FARRELL GREENE.

A BALLAD OF HALLOWEEN

*All night the wild wind on the heath
 Whistled its song of vague alarms;
 The poplars tossed their naked arms
 All night in some mad dance of death.*

Mignon Isá hath left her bed
 And bared her shoulders to the blast;
 The long procession of the dead
 Stared at her as it passed.

“Oh, there, methinks, my mother smiled,
 And there my father walks forlorn,
 And there the little nameless child
 That was the parish scorn.

“And there my olden comrades move,
 And there my sister smiles apart,
 But nowhere is the fair, false love
 That broke my loving heart.

“Oh, false in life, oh, false in death,
 Wherever thy mad spirit be,
 Could it not come this night,” she saith,
 “To keep a tryst with me?”

Mignon Isá hath turned alone;
 Bitter the pain and long the years;
 The moonlight on the cold gravestone
 Was warmer than her tears.

*All night the wild wind on the heath
 Whistled its song of vague alarms;
 The poplars tossed their naked arms
 All night in some mad dance of death.*

THEODOSIA GARRISON.



AN ABSURD IDEA

BELLE—Do you suppose the Count knows father has lost everything?
 LENA—Of course not. Did you think he would trifle with your affections?

THE SEATING OF VESTER

By Frank Roe Batchelder

VESTER was one of the intermittents of the Congressional Directory.

And an "intermittent" is—?

He is a representative who regularly runs for Congress, fails to receive the certificate of election, contests the seat, and gets it—if his party happen to have a majority in the House. His name never appears in the first edition of the Directory, nor always in the second, but is pretty sure to be printed in the third.

Vester had the usual contest on hand and was confident of being seated, for he had received several hundred more votes than ever before. Of course Birch, the sitting member, was defending his seat. Evidence had been taken and the case had been regularly referred to the Elections Committee.

From long experience Vester was handling his contest with skill and wisdom. All the arguments by which he had proved his right to a seat in previous years were newly dressed for the occasion in a bulky document, and he devoted his spare time to "ploughing" with members who might be influenced by good eatables and drinkables, and who had known him in previous Congresses as a good fellow who was willing to lose his money at poker—even if he did steal his seat.

There was one thing that gave Vester some uneasiness, however. In the hearings before the Elections Committee—those solemn farces where members pretend to sit in grave judgment on questions of tissue-paper ballots, "intimidation," and so on, as if they did not know

beforehand that they are bound to vote another unit into their strength in the House—in those symposia of legal profundity and open-hearted fact-seeking, Congressman Brady, of Massachusetts, in his first term, had shown a disposition to be fractious. He was of Vester's party, and the party needed votes; but Brady had an uncomfortable way of questioning and cross-questioning Vester and Vester's henchmen who appeared as witnesses before the Committee, that aroused fears of his refusing to assume a correct party attitude when the case should be acted on.

When the hearings were concluded and the Committee resumed consideration of the case in executive session, Brady "let himself out." He denounced the growing evil of seat-stealing, declaring that contests were brought on flimsy grounds or no grounds at all by men who expected to be seated for party reasons, or to get the usual honorarium, if the contest should not be sustained. He declared that on the evidence Vester had not been elected, and that the arguments in his favor would not hold water. News of Brady's bellicose attitude was noised abroad, and gave Vester a very bad quarter of an hour. His contests had been turned down with scant courtesy when the other party was in power—he expected that; but to be turned down by his own party meant political death. His people at home might refuse him another nomination. But Vester was a steady player in the game of contest, and no quitter. He caused Brady to be labored with. House leaders sat down by the Massachusetts man and repre-

sented that the party margin was small—they needed a few more votes, in fact, to have a good working majority. Even the Speaker, who seldom burned his fingers in contest matters, sent for Brady, and inquired, with a good-natured drawl, if he did not think he might be mistaken in his attitude.

"You see, Brady," said Dormer, one of the leaders, "Vester has been regularly seated on a contest ever since I've been here, and there's no doubt that Birch (Vester's opponent) isn't in touch with his party. They tell me the district would always elect Vester if the election judges were not all on the other side."

"Damn the election judges!" said Brady, who was beginning to be nettled at the evident purpose of the leaders to whip him into line; "I tell you, Vester didn't carry the district—he didn't get the votes. Intimidation? Look here, Dormer, you know as well as I do that there's no more intimidation in that district than there is—well, right in the big manufacturing districts of Pennsylvania, for instance, if you want to get near home."

Despite all persuasion, Brady persisted in declaring that he would vote in Committee and in the House against seating Vester.

The leaders objected to a party row; besides, Brady was eloquent and persuasive; they had few votes to spare; he might succeed in shutting Vester out; but whether he did or not, he would give the opposition press barrels of ammunition if he carried out his purpose of making a general raid on party seat-stealing.

The Committee voted by a majority of one to report the usual resolutions declaring Vester duly elected and entitled to his seat. Brady wrote the minority report—not a long one, but an earnest of the fight he proposed to make in the House.

The leaders made a careful canvass and concluded that, in spite of Brady, Vester could be seated, with two or three votes to spare—too close to be pleasant, but enough to take a chance

on, and, as Dormer had said, they needed a good working majority. In obedience to their instructions, therefore, Braman, Chairman of the Elections Committee, gave notice that on April 20 he would call up the report and accompanying resolutions in the contested election case of *Vester vs. Birch*.

But Vester had three weeks' grace before the twentieth of April, and he was a man of expedients.

He was not a poor man, as the elegant house he had built out toward Chevy Chase gave evidence, and the first thing he did was to give a little dinner to some of the leaders, at which they talked over the situation, drank Vester's champagne, ate his terrapin and became more than ever anxious to see him seated.

"I suppose," said Vester, "there's no use working on Brady?"

"Time wasted," said Dormer. "I tried to make a little deal with him on the Boston Harbor Appropriation, but he looked at me in such a damned peculiar way I dropped it."

"Brady's honest," said Murfree, sententiously; "he believes in himself, you know; besides, he's already got a good deal of advertising out of the thing, and he's going to splurge when he makes his speech in the House. They tell me he wants to run for Governor of Massachusetts next year."

"Well," said Vester, "even if he puts up his best fight we've got the votes, haven't we?"

"We haven't any to spare, Vester," said Dormer, "and I'm uneasy about Blake and Wetherington. Blake says that seating Beaumont was about all his stomach could stand—he doesn't like the idea of another dose. Still, he claims he'll vote with the party. Wetherington says, 'Yes, yes, yes,' but I don't like his uneasiness when he's canvassed. He acts as if he had something up his sleeve."

"Wetherington!" exclaimed Vester; "by gad! don't you remember the fight we had in the Fifty-first over that public building bill of his? The bill didn't pass, and he blamed me for it,

though it went through afterward, and I supposed he was all right again. He seems friendly enough now."

"I don't know," said Dormer, doubtfully; "the canvass shows two or three votes to spare, but if some of our side should be sick, we'd be in a fix."

When his guests had gone Vester reviewed the situation. "I don't like it," he concluded; "I've got to do some missionary work that'll count, or I'm beaten."

The next day Vester received important news from an unexpected quarter. It came in a note from the wife of a Senator at whose house Vester was a frequent caller—especially when the Senate was in session. All it said was:

DEAR MR. VESTER:

That dreadful contest must be preying on your mind to make you forget your friends for a whole week. Do come and tell me about it; and let me tell you something I've just learned.

Sincerely,

A. K.

Vester lost no time in responding to the invitation. He rang the Senator's door-bell at one o'clock that afternoon, and was soon chatting with the vivacious partner of the Senatorial joys and sorrows.

Senator Kilman was proud of his young wife, and discussed with her many matters of public business about which he never consented to be interviewed. Her bright mind had, in fact, often served him well at critical moments, and in her discretion he had such perfect confidence that his views on pending questions, the premature publication of which would often have affected the stock market, were freely disclosed to her.

In a chat touching matters at the Capitol on the preceding day he had alluded to Vester's contest for a seat in the House. Vester sat at his table often enough for him to feel interested.

"Yes, my dear," he said, "I believe Vester may be in danger of staying out this time. Carwell, of Michigan, was over to see me to-day about calling up a pension bill, and incidentally

he spoke of Vester and Brady's fight against him. He said he admired Brady and believed he knew what he was talking about—thought Vester was simply stealing the seat, anyway. He also dropped a hint to the effect that at least one other member who is counted on for a straight party vote might kick over the traces. When I attempted to draw him out, however, he said he expected Vester would be seated, and then changed the conversation. I shouldn't wonder, though, if some of the people over there were called home on important business or something like that when the vote comes. I'm afraid Vester's chances are more desperate than he thinks."

This was what the friendly Mrs. Kilman was anxious to tell Vester—and it thoroughly alarmed him.

No hint of Carwell's doubtful attitude had come to him before, and Carwell had alluded to "another." That other might be Blake or Wetherington, or still another possible follower of Brady. If a secret defection existed which could not be counteracted, he would not be seated.

He explained to the Senator's wife the situation as it really was. He also, like the Senator, trusted to her discretion; in fact, it had enabled him to pass a good many hours in her society when both were supposed to be otherwise engaged.

Other men paid her court—and she tantalized them and kept them at arm's length. But Vester had her favor in full. She wanted him seated, and, with her keen knowledge of politics, she scented danger, large, depressing danger.

She had helped the Senator out of political difficulties, and was not averse to employing her wit and experience in the present case. Vester as a Congressman, calling frequently at Senator Kilman's house—presumably on matters of public interest—was one thing; but Vester as a plain citizen, coming too often, might be impossible. Vester certainly must be seated.

"Have you thought of the other side?" she inquired, after they had discussed the case.

"Oh, they'll vote solidly for Birch. They can't vote for me, you know—their people at home would raise a terrible howl if they went back on their party. Besides, the margin is so small every vote counts, and they want to hold the majority in check. It isn't worth while looking for help there."

"Well," she said, reflectively, with a faint blush, "there's Odenton."

"Ah!" said Vester, politely, with a splendid affectation of ignorance; "do you think Odenton might be worked upon?"

"Oh, not money!" she said, with a tinge of disgust. "But he's very friendly here. I've introduced his daughter a good deal."

The fact was that Odenton's admiration for the bright star in the Senatorial circle was so obvious that people had laughed about it. But he had never gotten near enough to singe his wings at the candle-flame.

"And possibly Grey," continued Vester's vis-à-vis, with a slight frown. Grey was a Knickerbocker Congressman, polished and suave, a man-about-town in New York and appreciative of feminine charms wherever found. He also had been tantalized—but not encouraged.

Vester knew when to follow a conversational lead and when to avoid it.

"Of course," he said, "if Birch should lose two or three of his party, even with Carwell and Blake against us, I might win. But I must be going. I'm ever so much obliged to you for keeping me posted."

And for once he was not detained when he rose to go.

The Senator's wife had her plan, and it needed to be quickly set on foot. Her secretary had a busy afternoon and evening, but the invitations for her cotillion were in the mail before midnight.

The night of the dance found the Senator's house filled with flowers and music, a tempting supper in readiness, and the Senator in an uncomfortable dress-coat and his spouse in shining satin receiving the lucky guests—for all were counted lucky

who were bidden to the function. Vester was not there—but not because he had been slighted. Previously prompted by the merest hint, he had found it necessary to send regrets. Odenton was there, however, with his pretty daughter, whose delight at being a guest of Mrs. Senator Kilman was apparent. Grey also appeared, an epitome of metropolitan style, and carrying well the marks of forty-odd years of a gay life.

It was Grey who led the cotillion with the Senator's wife, and as they waltzed he found himself favored as never before. His attentions were received with an arch look that surprised him and sent the blood titillating to his finger tips.

"What a Juno!" he muttered, his senses ravished by the exquisite charms of the well-developed woman who now seemed to single him out for the bestowal of little coquettices as much as she had previously evaded his careful advances.

Odenton looked on with fierce jealousy—but he was to have his time, too, for the charming hostess assigned him the pleasant duty of taking her out to supper, and in the conservatory listened to his ardent compliments, thinly veiled, with a not unwelcome smile.

It was one of those evenings of sensuous music and odorous bloom that blot out the realities of 10 A.M. to 6 P.M. and make the passing of tariff bills or the settlement of currency questions seem like hazy somethings of another world—poor triumphs indeed in comparison with the present favor of a beautiful woman.

It was on Friday that Grey, looking up from the House floor to the gallery reserved for the families of members, saw a gloved hand gently waving recognition to him from the front seat. He responded with alacrity, and in a few moments was sitting beside the Senator's wife, who was looking her best in a superbly fitting street gown of blue, which set off her fine fresh face and graceful figure to great advantage.

They chatted of inconsequential

things for a few moments, and finally she said: "By the way, Mr. Grey, I want your advice—professional advice," she laughed merrily. "I've heard that you're considered one of the leading lights of the bar in New York" (Grey privately wondered how his legal attainments had grown to such proportions), "and I need the help of a lawyer. But there are too many people here," she said, glancing about the gallery; "my carriage is at the west door; will you come for a drive? and I'll tell you all about it."

Grey, with his satisfaction already assuming large proportions, lost no time in getting his hat from the coat-room and escorting her to the carriage.

"*Soldiers' Home*," she said to the coachman, and they bowled rapidly along.

"You know, Mr. Grey," she continued, taking up the conversation, "I'm quite a business woman, and I can't bother the Senator with my affairs. He's so busy, and he laughs at my speculations. But I want to buy a country place on Long Island Sound, and I've just had some correspondence with the attorneys in New York who are the selling agents. I've seen the place, you know—it was poor Colonel Decker's, and he gave us a house-party there once upon a time. I want to go and talk the matter over at the agents' office, and I need an attorney who is thoroughly versed in New York law. Now, could you—would you go to their office with me, and see that I don't get cheated, you know?" she concluded, laughing.

"I shall be delighted," replied Grey, "to render any service I can."

"And you must make your fee reasonable; you know this is a business matter."

"Ah," said Grey, "I shall be amply rewarded by the honor of your confidence—and your company," he added, boldly.

"Very well, then," she said, ignoring the familiarity; "I shall depend upon you. I think of going over to New York in a week or so, and I will notify you when I will call

at your office. Don't forget to give me the number."

Grey wrote his Wall street address on a card and handed it to her, saying he went over to New York every week and would be at her service there on any day she might name.

"And now," she said, "business is tabooed; let's talk of other things. What chance has the tariff bill?"

So they talked of politics and society and what-not, and the Senator's wife sparkled and bloomed, and Grey was wholly in the toils when, finally, she set him down again at the west door of the House.

He wondered at the courage she had displayed in proposing to meet him in New York, and he was a little surprised at his easy, if somewhat tardy conquest. But his vanity reassured him as to the latter, and perhaps out West—whence the Senator hailed—they were not so scrupulous about the conventions.

Miss Odenton and her father were asked to dine at the Senator's house—"very informally"—a few nights later. It was one of Mrs. Kilman's kind little efforts to make the session pleasant for the young people of the official circle. Probably it would have been hard to tell who was most delighted with the invitation, the ambitious young girl or the ardent Congressman. It was a very quiet and delightful evening. The Senator liked to entertain, even though his wife always selected the guests. He enjoyed showing Miss Odenton his collection of letters from eminent personages, and she asked him innumerable questions about the men and their politics, which entertained and amused him vastly. Meanwhile, it fell to Mrs. Kilman to show Odenton the pictures scattered about the house, rare and costly works, many of them; some with a history.

"This is a portrait of the sixth Lord Baltimore," she said to Odenton. "And, by the way, have you ever been out to Calvert Manor?"

Odenton confessed that his explorations in the vicinity of Washington had not reached that point.

"Oh, you should go," she said. "It's a delightful old colonial place. Daniel Webster was often a guest there, you know, and Henry Clay; and there's the quaintest old lumbering family carriage in the coachhouse."

"Where is the place?" asked Odenton. "I must try to see it."

"Why, it's six or eight miles out—just beyond Hyattsville."

"Does the railroad pass near the place?" inquired Odenton.

"Oh, yes; but you mustn't go in the cars—that spoils the romance. You must drive out just as Webster and the other guests did, and go through old Bladensburg, past the dueling ground. I'll drive you out myself, Mr. Odenton, some day, if I can persuade you to leave your pressing duties at the House. Come! Is it a bargain—will you go with me?"

She looked at him with invitation and favor sparkling in her eyes; she was all animation, as if she scented a new excitement outside the weary round of Washington society life.

"You are very kind," he said, looking at her with ardor in his glance; "I will go with the greatest pleasure. I could not have a greater," he said, with halting assurance.

"Oh, that will be fine," she returned. "You're doing me the favor. I'm a thorough antiquarian in seeking out these old, historic homes, and I'm in clover when I can find a new victim to whom to point out their beauties and tell their histories. If you should fail me, now!" she said, with mock sternness.

"I shall not fail," he replied, with a steady glance.

She blushed a little under his gaze.

"Then it's all settled," she said, gaily, and she laid her hand persuasively on his arm and drew him on to another room.

When Odenton and his daughter left the house and went back to the hotel where they had rooms, the girl chattered incessantly of what she had seen and heard. Mrs. Killman had asked her to receive with

her on her next "day." She was the happiest of Washington butterflies.

Odenton was silent, but filled with new delight. To him the proposed excursion to Calvert Manor was the opening of the gates that might admit him to the throne where he hoped to fall on his knees before the queen and be knighted.

Meanwhile, Vester was hard at work. He had not called at the Senator's house since the day he wasbidden there, but he was satisfied that the cleverest woman in official life was doing something for him, and a clever woman is a valuable political ally in Washington.

The leaders were moving heaven and earth to make sure of a majority when Vester's case should come before the House. Brady was now openly defiant, and his defection had aroused and encouraged the minority, whose leaders were also pledging their members to certain attendance on the day of the vote. An occasional whisper to the effect that Brady would carry at least four votes of the majority with him, went the rounds. The rumor could not be verified, but Vester knew, and the leaders knew, that if he won it would be by the turn of a hair.

The debate on the resolutions opened at last, and an agreement to vote at five o'clock on the following day was reached after some wrangling. Brady made his speech—a fine oratorical effort, applauded by the solid ranks of the minority, and winced under by the leaders, who did not relish the words "seat-stealing," "debasing the suffrage," "indefensible partisanship," and so forth, with which Brady garnished his argument.

So far as could be known, every member of the majority, except one, who was seriously ill, would be in town on the following day in time to record his vote. For forty-eight hours the wires were hot with urgent appeals to absent members to be on hand and with replies promising attendance. To offset the absence of the majority member, one of the minority

had been called home by the serious illness of his wife, whose death was hourly expected. These two members were paired.

The second day of the debate dawned clear and bright—one of those warm, soft, sweet days of April, when Washington is at its best.

Grey was an early riser, despite the late hours he kept, and at half-past seven o'clock that morning, his man, who had just finished shaving him, handed him a yellow envelope that had just come in. Grey tore it open and read this telegram—a night message, filed the evening previous:

NEW YORK, 19.
HON. VERPLANCK GREY, M. C.,
1602 J St., WASHINGTON, D. C.

Will be at your office for consultation with agents two o'clock to-morrow. Please do not fail me.

ALEXANDRINE KILMAN.

"The devil!" ejaculated Grey. "Two o'clock to-day!" He glanced at the clock. "That means the eight-thirty train—and by the powers, it means I'll not be here to vote!"

Grey was absolutely staggered. The alternative was to break his appointment with the woman whose permanent favor he hoped to win and who had herself suggested meeting him in New York. He knew that would mean the end of his hopes. The Senator's wife was capricious, and she would never forgive him for failing to meet her. No talk of duty at the House would elicit more than a scornful rejoinder: "You acted very honorably, I'm sure, Mr. Grey." He could see just how she would look when she said it, and she would never turn her eyes in his direction again; of that he was sure. He must meet her, and be recorded as absent and not paired when Vester *vs.* Birch was voted on. He did not care a snap of his finger for Birch, but he did wish to maintain a correct party attitude, and he was scrupulous in his attendance to his Congressional duties.

Grey hesitated, but the minutes were flying. His vanity and his hopes conquered. "John," he called to his man, "quick with my suit case

fixed for New York. Eight-thirty train, John; have a carriage ready." The well-trained valet knew how to work rapidly. A cup of coffee and a roll were Grey's breakfast, and forty seconds before leaving time he stepped aboard his train.

Half an hour earlier, in the slip at Liberty street, New York, the fair Mrs. Kilman might have been seen on the ferryboat that connected with the eight-twelve train for Washington. If she was inwardly a trifle nervous she gave no sign of it. Yet even her cool sense of superiority was a little disturbed by reflections on the possible result of the game she was playing.

An hour or two later, while the two travelers were being hurried toward each other over the rails, Odenton was reading a dainty note on crested paper, which had been left at his hotel that morning by a servant from Senator Kilman's house.

"Dear Mr. Odenton," said the pretty little note, "I have not forgotten our drive to Calvert Manor. I hope you haven't lost your enthusiasm for historical research. This is such a beautiful day that I am asking you to drive with me to-day. I will call at the house for you at two o'clock. I'm sure you will not disappoint me, for I'm determined to give you a valuable lesson in history, and I'm impatient to begin." And she signed it "Yours sincerely, Alexandrine Kilman."

She had taken a chance on its being "such a beautiful day," but then, had it rained, there was another note that the servant would have delivered instead.

Odenton smiled delightedly as he read the note.

"Well," he said, "does this mean as much as I hope it does? If things go well I am surely in luck."

But a shadow crossed his face. "Two o'clock!" he ejaculated, "and the vote's at five! Can we make it?" He calculated rapidly: "An hour out, half an hour there, an hour back—4.30; there'll be ample time.

Still," he said, annoyed, "there might be something else—luncheon or chocolate at the house afterward. Well, I shall have to miss that. She'll know my excuse is a reasonable one."

Congressman Grey entered his private office in Wall street a few minutes before two o'clock, brushed up hastily and donned fresh neckwear; then he stepped into his main office, where the clerks were surprised to see him.

"Has a lady called to see me?" he asked, carelessly.

"No, sir," said the stenographer, "but there are some letters on your desk. They would have been forwarded to Washington to-day, sir."

With sudden misgiving, Grey took from his desk two notes directed in the same hand, one of which had come by mail, the other in an un-stamped envelope, evidently left by a messenger.

He tore open the first and read:

NEW YORK, April 19.

DEAR MR. GREY:

I will be at your office at two o'clock to-morrow and avail myself of your kind offer to go with me to Messrs. Burchell & Ladd about the real estate matter of which I spoke.

As I do not know whether you are in Washington or here, I am also wiring you at Washington.

Yours sincerely,

ALEXANDRINE KILMAN.

Grey tossed the letter aside and opened the second note. It read as follows:

NEW YORK, April 20.

DEAR MR. GREY:

Will you pardon me? I am sure you will, for I am very much annoyed myself. I am suddenly called back to Washington, and am leaving at eight this morning.

I remember you said you came to New York every week, so I hope this is one of the days when you are here, and that I have not taken you from Washington at any inconvenience to yourself.

Another time will do as well for Messrs. Burchell & Ladd.

Yours sincerely,

ALEXANDRINE KILMAN.

"Good heavens!" cried Grey,

"she's in Washington now. And I've lost the roll-call!"

He raged and swore, but he did not even suspect that he was the victim of a clever woman's trick to make him miss that very roll-call. He simply pronounced an anathema on the caprices of women in general.

Two o'clock! The next train back would leave at three—five hours on the rail—due in Washington at eight; but the vote would be taken, and the House would have adjourned long before that time. He could only hope that his vote would not be needed; that Birch might pull through without him—some of the majority might be absent. So he set himself to frame excuses to be made to his party leaders when he should return to Washington.

At half-past one that day Senator Kilman's automobile was in waiting at the Baltimore & Ohio station. Mrs. Kilman stepped to the platform as fresh and radiant as if from her dressing-room, charmingly gowned, and giving no hint of travel stain. She had deftly tidied herself in the women's room of the Pullman.

The auto whirled her up to the west porch of the House. She had but a few moments to wait when Odenton came out, groomed with unwonted care, and looking the satisfaction he felt.

"So you're on hand," she cried to him, gaily; "I'm glad that Calvert's attractions are superior to those of the bear garden."

"Oh," he said, gallantly, "the House could never hope to compete with you. But," he continued, as the driver put the carriage in motion, "there's an important vote to-day, the contested election case of Vester vs. Birch. We vote at five."

"Really?" she said. "Yes; I've heard about the case. So they vote to-day? I'm such a poor reader of the papers, I depend on the Senator to tell me what happens up here, after it's all over."

"The vote will be very close," said Odenton; "I am bound not to miss

it. I'd be ostracized if I did, I'm afraid. So I shall depend on you to save the party by having me back in time."

"How absurd!" she said, with a pout. "I thought you belonged to me this afternoon. I've ordered luncheon at five, too."

He protested, with many explanations and apologies, but she seemed a little miffed, and he chafed under the mischance of the situation.

"Oh, well," she said, finally, her seeming ill-temper vanishing in a smile, "I shall have to submit. There's ample time for Calvert—but you've spoiled the luncheon."

They had started along Maryland avenue, toward its junction with the Bladensburg road.

"Oh, Henry!" she called, suddenly, and the driver shut off the power and bent respectfully to hear her commands.

"Take us out the Lincoln road," she said; "I think it's just as near; and it's much prettier, they tell me."

"Very well, ma'am," said the driver; "it's not so good a road, ma'am," he suggested, respectfully.

"I dare say it will do," she said, decisively; "the Lincoln road, Henry."

They turned northward and the carriage whirled on again.

"I want you to have a day's real adventure," she said, smiling, to Odenton; "I've never been over this road, but I looked it up on the map, and it seems inviting. I like new roads once in a while, just as we like to know new people," she concluded, carelessly.

Odenton felt the force of the delicate flattery and settled back with the determination to make the most of his opportunities.

The road proved to be very rough, after all, and very hilly. It was necessary to drive the auto slowly much of the way, and time slipped by rapidly. The road seemed interminably long, and it intersected the main road just outside Bladensburg after making a long detour.

It was not much further to Calvert

Manor. Once there, the people who lived in the old house made their visitors free to examine it as they would. Mrs. Kilman was filled with enthusiasm now, and showed Odenton every nook and corner.

"This was Daniel Webster's room," she said; "he was frequently a guest here. And this is the room always kept ready for Henry Clay. They say that here he drafted the Missouri Compromise."

She had the coach-house opened, and the ancient family carriage was duly inspected. Then she led the way to the great octagonal barn—a curious structure, with stalls for two hundred horses and cattle, she explained.

So on, across the road, up to the little graveyard, that they found in a sadly neglected state, where she spelled out the faded inscriptions on the marble slab over the remains of George Calvert and his consort.

Time passed rapidly while they were rambling about, and her vivacious talk kept Odenton's mind busy. She made some pretty speeches to him, and he became more enamored than ever.

But on leaving the little graveyard Odenton slyly looked at his watch. He was frightened, for the hands showed a quarter past four. Forty-five minutes later the voting would begin!

She detected the sly look at his watch. "Oh!" she cried, pouting prettily at the hand retreating from his fob. "Bored so soon! how un-gallant! Well, well, and after we've been reveling in the days of real chivalry!"

Odenton colored and stammered something about the importance of his vote.

"Pshaw," she retorted, "you Congressmen are so tremendously important to the public welfare! I'm going to be offended," and she made a serious face.

Odenton was overwhelmed with confusion, and his embarrassment was not relieved by her raillery.

"I beg your pardon," he said, lamely, "but you know the vote is to

be taken at five o'clock, and it's now a quarter after four."

"Dear me!" she said, in mock surprise, "so late? Now, the time has passed so quickly for me that I thought it much earlier. However, Solon must sit upon the bench," she added, resignedly. "O history, where are thy charms? O pleasure, where is thy victory?"

Odenton was in perspiration, from vexation at the position in which she placed him and from fear of missing the roll-call. But she now led the way rapidly to the auto, waiting at the foot of the hill, and said, as they entered, "After all, you'll be in time, Mr. Odenton. The auto is really very swift, you know, and we'll go back by the level road. There are two sets of resolutions to be voted on, are there not? It will take at least forty minutes to call the roll on one of them, and you'll be in time to respond on the second call."

She showed surprising familiarity with House procedure for a woman who was "such a poor reader of the papers."

"As rapidly as possible, Henry," she said to the driver, and they passed through Hyattsville at a pace that startled the loungers about the place. Odenton breathed more freely, realizing that at this pace they would reach the Capitol in good season, and that he would have had his embarrassment for nothing. Just before they reached the bridge at Bladensburg, however, there was a slowing down, and the auto stopped. Henry jumped from the box and ran to examine the machinery.

"Nothing wrong, I hope, Henry?" said the Senator's wife.

"Nothing of any account, ma'am," replied the driver; "I don't just make it out, but everything seems to be all right."

He remounted the box and the auto started smoothly. They bowled along at a fair pace, though Henry seemed more cautious than before and selected his road carefully. The sky had clouded while they were at Calvert, and now a gentle April rain began to

fall. This made it necessary to stop once more to pull up the hood of the carriage and adjust the storm protectors. Odenton's nervousness returned, but he forced himself to respond to his companion's lively chat in becoming vein.

Again they started and put another mile behind them, but as they reached a hill on the loneliest part of the road, the auto stopped stubbornly. Both Odenton and the driver jumped out to ascertain the difficulty. Odenton was now feverishly impatient; the driver imperturbable, but perplexed.

"Well, Henry?" inquired his mistress.

"If you please, ma'am, I'm sorry to say I'm afraid the battery's given out."

"What! it never happened before! Was it recharged this morning?"

"Er—why, ma'am, I'm not sure it was, ma'am."

"But I've repeatedly cautioned you never to go outside the city without having the battery fully charged."

"Yes, ma'am," said Henry, meekly.

"This is dreadful, Mr. Odenton," she said, turning to the Congressman, who was pacing up and down in the thin mud now forming.

Odenton did not seem to hear. He was frantic. Six miles from the Capitol, and his watch showed ten minutes to five! He thought of walking. Ridiculous! It would take him fifty minutes to reach the electric cars at the end of the Bladensburg road.

"Henry," said the Senator's wife, with sudden resolution, "I remember a florist's place just over the hill. Perhaps you can get a team there. Run quickly!"

"Wait," called Odenton, huskily. It flashed over him that he might get the team and even yet reach the Capitol on time—if he did not return for the lady.

But the driver was already running rapidly down the road.

Odenton could not leave his companion alone on that road, in the rain and unprotected. There might be negroes about.

He groaned.

"Oh, Mr. Odenton," she cried, tremulously, "I know it's my fault, and I'm so sorry. Run after Henry, and if he gets the team send him back to me. Someone will come along with a carriage and take us in."

"And leave you alone?" said Odenton. "We are not bred that way in the South, Mrs. Kilman." He was getting calmer now, though he no longer smiled when he spoke to her.

She felt a secret sense of regret when she saw how highly he regarded his duty. Something of Odenton's old manner returned to him as he concluded that the case was hopeless, and he took his seat again beside her, helped to rearrange her wraps and, with a ghost of a laugh, said they "must make the best of it—he hoped she would not take cold."

The conversation was sufficiently dismal in tone, however.

It was fully half an hour before Henry returned in the florist's buggy, driving at a furious gait. He had arranged to drive them to the electric cars, and then return, when the florist's men would help him to draw the auto to shelter for the night and bring it into town in the morning.

Odenton made a sorry attempt at a jest as he helped the Senator's wife into the buggy; Henry took his place on the edge of the seat between them, and they moved toward the city again.

As they were about to board the electric car, a stray cab came along the Bennings road, and Odenton hailed it. Cabby was glad of a fare in town, and Odenton directed him to drive to the Senator's house.

"No, no," cried Mrs. Kilman; "to the Capitol!"

"Too late!" said Odenton. "You must get home at once, for you may have taken cold."

"I insist!" she cried. "The vote may have been delayed; there may have been filibustering; there's always a chance of some delay."

She seemed so desperately in earnest that Odenton assented.

"Lively, now," he said to the driver; "a dollar extra if you make fast time."

The driver used the braid, and they violated the speed regulation.

The rain had ceased and the sky had cleared as they came in sight of the Capitol. She grasped him by the arm, with a curious expression on her face. "The flag is up!" she cried.

It was true. In the evening light Old Glory shone against the sky, flying proudly over the law-makers, to tell the town below that the House was still in session. But even while he looked, with sudden access of hope, and as they entered the Capitol grounds, the flag fluttered and drooped and went down out of sight. The House had adjourned.

The cab took them to her house. With an effort at sociability she reminded him of the luncheon, and urged him to enter, but he gently excused himself. It was past the hour, and she would need some time to herself after exposure in the rain. He was very courteous—but his enthusiasm was gone.

She sighed as she entered the door. She had smiled at the thought of Grey's discomfiture, but she respected Odenton's high regard for what he considered his duty.

"He is a real man, after all," she said to herself. "Is Vester worth it?"

And Vester *vs.* Birch? Carwell was whipped into line; but Blake and Wetherington, with Churchill, an unsuspected bolter, voted with Brady against their party, and had the minority cast its full vote Birch would have held his seat. But Grey and Odenton were "absent and not paired," and Vester was seated by a majority of one.

Henry found a twenty-dollar note in an envelope on his table the next day. The servant who obeys orders, and may be trusted not to talk, is worthy of his hire.

UNDERSTANDING

THREE never can be doubt 'twixt you and me,
 Nor scorn of small missteps, because we know,
 Although the feet may stumble as we go,
 The gaze is upward, as it aye should be.
 Therefore, dear friend, no doubt 'twixt you and me.

There never can be doubt 'twixt you and me.
 What though the mists are black? We understand.
 Each in the darkness feels the other's hand,
 Knows that at dawning close the friend will be.
 Therefore, dear friend, no doubt 'twixt you and me.

There never can be doubt 'twixt you and me.
 The wave retreats a moment from the shore,
 Only to turn and meet the sands once more
 In a duet of splendid harmony!
 Therefore, dear friend, no doubt 'twixt you and me.

ELISABETH R. FINLEY.



PUZZLED FOR ONCE

MRS. BANKS—What do you think of your new neighbors?

MRS. BROOKS—Well, I can't say. They moved in when I was downtown, and they have their washing done out.



NOT HIS FAULT

HENRY—What leads you to think I'm fickle?

HENRIETTA—You say you've been engaged four times.

HENRY—Yes; but each time it was the girl who was fickle.



MEANLY MISCONSTRUED

TANKLEIGH—Do you believe man is the stronger vessel?

MISS VAN SHARP—Well, he can hold more, it seems.

THE DILEMMA OF MR. PENWICK

By L. H. Bickford

AS Mr. Penwick reached the terrace of the Earl of Sommerville's country house he met Lord Reggie Stafford coming violently out. The Earl had thrown Lord Reggie down the stone steps, and the final bound of his short, stout body almost unbalanced the newcomer. Lord Reggie, who appeared confused and a trifle abashed, recovered his hat, and as he dusted his afternoon coat with a blue-tinted handkerchief, apologized largely and hoped that Mr. Penwick had suffered no hurt.

"The Earl is forever pitching me out at the most interesting point of a political discussion," explained Lord Reggie, as he passed on his way. "Fortunately, we were not at the top of the house—"

Mr. Penwick advanced with some misgivings. He remembered that the Earl was ordinarily tempestuous about four o'clock in the afternoon, particularly toward his best friends. He remembered, with relief, that he knew the eccentric old gentleman but slightly, and speculated vaguely on the sort of reception he would receive. But it was the Duchess of Wentworth, and not the Earl, who met him as he entered, and she explained that the Earl, being slightly fatigued, would spend the afternoon in his tub eating ices.

"You have met Lord Reggie, then?" asked the Duchess. "Such an interesting young man, and so well posted! He is the only person for whom the Earl shows any decided fondness. I am sure they would be mutually bored should one die before the other. . . . So kind of you to

come, and you really mustn't mind my informality. The servants are all away. They always are away on Thursdays. We manage it by giving them all their day out collectively. Then one knows they will be somewhere about on other days. I shall prepare the dinner myself—it is very simple, after all. One has only *not* to follow the recipes—let me advise you, Mr. Penwick, *never* to follow recipes. They are made only for the middle classes, and are, besides, horribly expensive. We shall not have a very large party, particularly if the Princess stays away, as we all hope she will. . . . If you will place your hat in the ice-box—no, not near the strawberries, please. I could never endure a black hat near anything red. It is one of my absurd superstitions of color. There, next the roast beef—that will do nicely."

He followed her into the drawing-room, a generous, fantastic apartment quaintly adorned with specimens of armor plate and unique little Chinese chopsticks, arranged alphabetically on one side of the room to spell "Welcome." There was a subdued green light over all, seeming to shed itself impartially, and penetrating even to remote corners. It was like a stage moonlight, and momentarily Mr. Penwick expected to see a villain enter and perform some slight act of homicide. Indeed, the thought enlarged with him and fascinated him. He wondered if the Duchess or himself would be the victim, and whether the performance would take the form of strangulation. Personally, he preferred strangulation, since there would be no show of blood; but the Duchess

was peculiar, and was as likely to choose curved, black scimitars as anything.

He was roused from his meditation by the deep, penetrating sound of a tocsin, and turned to discover that Miss Lucia Higgleton, the young American, was talking stridently beside him. He marveled at her presence, since the Duchess had said something about padlocking the doors, and then he was astonished to find that the room had suddenly filled with people.

"I told Maw," Miss Higgleton was saying, in her sprightly way, "that you had been spoke of as the tallestest man in London. Can I ask a favor, Mr. Penwipe—or should I say Penwick?"

He did not reply, but she took the affirmative for granted, as was her way when she met backward people.

"Then please say an epitaph for me—or is it an epilogue? One of them remarks with a *double contendre* twist—do."

Mr. Penwick started. It was for this, then, that the Duchess had invited him. Miss Higgleton plainly meant epigram, and he gasped as he recalled that he had a reputation for that sort of thing. It was impossible just then to remember how he had won it, but the knowledge that he was looked upon as an epigrammatic celebrity became actual and positive, and he shuddered.

"I—I am not sure that I brought one with me," he explained, lamely. "The day has been so warm, you know, that one hesitates to put too much on. Somewhere, in a box at home—"

"Oh, gooseberries!" tersely interrupted Miss Higgleton. "Everyone knows you keep a bunch of them about all the time. Have you looked in your hip pockets? If you haven't an epitaph, why are you here? Dig!"

He glanced up perplexedly and noted that her exasperating shock of red hair glinted oddly in the green light. Only her hair made Miss Higgleton socially possible.

"Dig?" he repeated.

"Yes—go after it, show it up! Maw'll expect something right smart from you. I'll look her up, and you can spring it when I see you at dinner."

She kissed him, impulsively, full on the lips, and he had scarcely recovered when he was amazed to find himself fanning the Countess of Chickenton, who had fallen, half-swooning, into a chair.

"Oh, give her her epigram!" she wailed, hysterically. "Let her have her epigram! Give the poor, dear thing her epigram!"

Mr. Penwick was necessarily astonished. People rushed in from everywhere. A small 'cellist, with a round, red face and a hoarse voice, sprang from behind some artificial rhododendrons and wildly waved his instrument over the head of the Countess. A thin woman, with transparent hands and a moony smile, called for spirits. A corpulent dowager beamed sympathetically. There was a confusion of suggestions, during which someone cried out that an atmospheric change was pending. Presently the light turned from green to pale orange, and under this influence the Countess revived sufficiently to be carried away on the back of the 'cello by Bevari, the stout tenor, and Murco, who wrote triplets daily to a woman in St. John's Wood who had been twice widowed.

The scene sickened Mr. Penwick. But for a flash of cool white, advancing through the throng, he would have attempted flight. When Lady Maryl reached him there was less of a crush, for the orchestrion had started and was playing a peculiar combination of the Chopin A flat waltz and a saltarelle by a nobody. It naturally attracted attention, and Mr. Penwick and Lady Maryl were comparatively isolated.

"I am so sorry for you," she said, fixing her clear eyes sympathetically on his collar-button, which, with an uncomfortable feeling, he realized was exposed. "Last night I dreamed of bugs—myriads of great, gorgeous bodies with opalescent wings; a cloud

of them, swirling in the midst of purple butterflies. I knew we should meet here."

"Was it an omen?" he asked, eagerly.

"How can I tell? I always meet you after dreaming of queer things," she answered, simply.

In the yellow light she had the ethereal appearance of a fairy bowed with some incomprehensible sorrow. He wanted to ask her if she knew that the terms of her uncle's will cut her off completely from the life she loved, and particularly from her worshipped bugs and butterflies, but he thought it might be impolitic. However, she divined his thoughts, and answered:

"Yes; it is cruel, isn't it? Butterflies! Nobody seems to understand—unless it is you." Her voice sank to a low, mist-like sob.

"But the leaves will be left," she continued, "the great, brown rustling leaves—and then, you know, I can help you—if I may." She was never in an autumnal mood for long. The orchestrion had ceased, to a smattering of gloved applause, and the crowd was moving in the direction of the dinner-room. The tide threatened to engulf her, and presently it did; but before she was quite lost she deftly extracted a small book from the folds of her gown and thrust it into his hands. He seized it, overwhelmed by a strange joy, instinctively knowing that it contained a collection of epigrams. He put it into the pocket of his coat, next his heart.

After all, the Princess was at table, devouring a timbale and criticising its construction. The Duchess was complacent, knowing that when the Princess complained she was surely satisfied. Not every Duchess knows the secret of a timbale. Even in the confused chatter everyone found time to realize this and to smile indulgently. The jest was plainly on the Princess. Mr. Penwick glanced about him somewhat fearfully. Lady Maryl, in her calm, cold way, was eating creams and trying to forget what Lord Algy Crickshaw was pouring into her left ear. The Count-

ess of Chickenton and the stout tenor were throwing intellectual buns at each other with methodical precision. A woman who wore a hat made of red poppies was weeping silently at the memory of something that had stirred her in girlhood. Four little choir boys, fresh-faced and surpliced, chanted the Litany slowly. They had been trained by the Duchess, and so did not materially disturb the guests. Two people, whom he did not know, had fallen asleep, and Miss Higgleton was putting spoonfuls of ice down their backs, to the distress of her Maw, who was reminding her that they would surely have pneumonia. The Princess was the first to attract general attention, and she did it by standing on her chair and, to Mr. Penwick's horror, pointing directly at him with a butter knife.

"That man is here again!" she cried, stridently, her small blue eyes gleaming viciously, "and he has had nothing to say. Why," and she surveyed the others, whose chatter suddenly ceased, "has he not been allowed to say anything?"

Mr. Penwick found himself to be the centre of attention. He looked appealingly at Lady Maryl and felt for the book next his heart. But Lady Maryl, having turned to box Lord Algy's ears, was leaving the table, taking the punch-bowl with her.

"Bring the hussy back!" shrieked the Princess, momentarily noting the incident; and then, before Lady Maryl could be stopped, "Say your epigram!" she howled in the direction of Mr. Penwick; "say your epigram and go!"

Mr. Penwick had only the consciousness that many eyes were upon him. He stole a hurried glance at the book and then flung it madly at the head of the Princess.

"It is only bad books that are good for anything," he shouted, "and that isn't mine, for Houssaye said it! I didn't come here to recite epigrams. I came to dinner. . . ."

He sank back helplessly. The Earl had come down in his bath-robe and

was making directly for him, while the guests babbled irresponsibly, discussing Houssaye.

Mr. Penwick, who had gone to sleep in Kansas City, woke up there. He heard a wild jangle of cable-car bells, and sat up on the couch in his library and wiped the perspiration from his face. Then he took up the three books lying on the floor beside him

and walked unsteadily over to the bookcase with them, returning with a copy of the American Encyclopedia.

"Hichens—Benson—Sarah Grand," he murmured. "I wonder where Araminta picked up all those English society novels? This comes of having what she calls a modern library."

He turned feverishly to the zoological terms in the Encyclopedia.



THE CAPTIVE

WHY does love weave such fetters for my feet?
O heart's delight, I should be far away;
Hark! through the casement sounds the world's heart-beat,
The echo of its fray!

Open thy gates and set me free again—
Thy tangling lashes hold me captive still,
And thus I kneel, filled with delicious pain,
A suppliant at thy will.

The blossom of thy mouth invites approach;
Its garnered sweetness I would fain surprise;
But should I on its petals fair encroach,
Wouldst slay me with thine eyes?

Have pity, beauteous lady! Bid me live;
Grant me some hope ere I from thee depart;
If guerdon for sweet duress I must give,
Maiden, I leave my heart.

LILA MUNRO TAINTER.



IMPOSSIBLE, THEN

SHÉ—Do you believe a man can love two women at once?
HE—Not if they both know it.



NOT INTENTIONAL

MERRITT—Chollie went out on a bear hunt and met with an accident.
CORA—Gracious! What was it?
MERRITT—He shot one.

THE PROPER "GIRLIE"

By Jack London

"GIRLIE" had always been a choice term of endearment with Ralph Ainslie. And it must be confessed he had applied it with great wisdom and discretion—from the little lady who swayed his destinies as a grammar school boy down to Maud. The list of the favored was quite a lengthy one, to be sure; but then a young heart and a roving love are necessarily correlative. Such is the nature of things, and who would alter it? But when the soft madness of the courtship of Maud fell upon him, the phrase had ripened to a fuller significance, and he had thought—at the time—that it would never again be transferred. In return, Maud had called him "Boyo." Never had sweeter phrases been more sweetly mated. Girlie and Boyo! Well, the two were married and—

Ainslie idly crumbled his toast and gazed across the breakfast table at Maud, blue-eyed and matronly; but the woman's face pictured on his mind's retina at the moment was dark-eyed and rebellious. No wifely sedateness in this other, nor calm strength of control; but rather the waywardness of mutable desires, rough-shod imperiousness and strange moods. A creature slight of heart for loyalty, but great of soul for love; well he knew her.

Perhaps it was the unconscious radiation of his present mental attitude, or the sum of his attitudes through many days, that made Maud lonely on her side of the table. At least, she felt depressed and isolated, as if in some way the bonds that once so tightly bound them were undergoing an extraordinary expansion. She

had expected that the fervid kisses that so sweetly punctuated their engagement period would change to the staid homage of tried affection, but not that they would become only a meaningless duty, the mere mechanical performance of a function. His whole demeanor had come to lack that subtle seriousness and enthusiasm the absence of which a woman is so quick to detect.

"What's the matter, Maud?" he asked, presently, observing for the first time how wretchedly the breakfast had passed off, and actuated by a desire to make amends. "What's the matter?" he repeated, noticing that her dreamy stare continued. "Anything wrong?"

"Ralph," with feminine irrelevance, "you never call me Girlie any more." Then, plaintively, "I'm only Maud now."

"And it's an age since I've heard you say Boyo," he retorted.

He did not appreciate the hurt flush that suffused her cheek; no more did he know how hard had been her struggle to abandon his pet name after he had ceased his Girlie. For half the tragedies of the world are worked out in the silence of women's hearts—tragedies that blundering men may never know nor understand.

Her eyes grew misty, but otherwise she made no reply. Ainslie rose and went to her side.

"Oh, Ralph, I don't know—everything's wrong, all wrong!" she sobbed on his shoulder.

The scent of her hair was like a caress, but it did not recall the erstwhile pleasant memories that it should, for he frowned unobserved

while he patted her shoulder soothingly.

"I have tried so hard to be good and true—to be Ralph's wife—" she raised her head bravely and looked him in the eyes—"but everything seems wrong. Something has come over us—between us. I had pictured everything so different after we were married, and now—I don't know, I—I cannot understand."

"There, there," he murmured, his face a study in surface masculine kindliness, "I'm afraid you are sick, just a little under the weather, you know. You're not quite yourself. A touch of fever, or cold, or something. I'll send up Dr. Jermyn on my way down town.

"Perhaps," he added, with wise forethought, as he kissed her at the door, "perhaps you need a little change of air or something. I think a little run of a week or so down to your mother's will do you good."

But she shook her head.

"Now the scenes begin," he muttered to himself as he boarded his car. "To-day comes the first, then to-morrow another—and they will continue to increase, quantitatively and qualitatively, till even a man's endurance can no longer stand them. Better put an end to the trouble now than to permit it to grow. I'll write Bertha at once and settle it out of hand."

It was with this laudable intention that he seated himself at his desk and invoked the epistolary demon. A peremptory call on the telephone interrupted him. It was an important deal, and Love must ever wait on Business.

"Poor little Maud! It's not her fault," he mused, as he stowed the half-finished missive away in a drawer; "only a queer concoction of Midsummer madness and my own brute selfishness. And it's Bertha who inoculated me, too."

Half-way down the elevator he had made up his mind to drop the whole thing by returning and destroying the letter; but at the bottom Business

shoved Love aside, and he hurried on to meet the directors of the projected company.

By three o'clock the bookkeeper was wondering at Ralph Ainslie's prolonged absence. At half after Mrs. Ainslie tripped past into her husband's private office. She had thought it all out, after the delightful fashion of womankind, and reached the conclusion that she knew so very little of men, after all, and that whatever had happened was the result of her own morbid brooding; so she had come there to be nice to her wronged husband and be forgiven. She opened the door of his private office softly, confronted the blank emptiness of the room, and decided to wait.

Her thoughts went back to the golden days of their first housekeeping, when she had run down to the office so often of an afternoon that Ralph declared her a precious little nuisance, and secreted caramels and chocolates in his desk to encourage another visit. With a sentimental fondness and a vague half-pain she tiptoed across the room and drew open a drawer. The upturned sheet and the superscription, "Dear Girlie," caught her eye. She glanced hurriedly at the upper right-hand corner, taking it for some old forgotten letter to herself, and noted the date with happy surprise. In her delight she did not remark the addressed envelope that was lying half-concealed beneath it. She began to read:

DEAR GIRLIE:

I sometimes think we have not fully understood each other of late. I, at least, know that I may have seemed cold at times, when, in reality, I was perplexed with other things. I have been somewhat worried and not quite myself, for all of which I intend to make full atonement. I shall explain all soon.

Believe me, Girlie, that the love I give you is the true love of my heart. I am making all arrangements so that we may—

"Just his stupid business!" she exclaimed, her dimmed eyes sparkling joyously. "And I'm sure more business made him break it off where

he did. And it's all my own letter! And he called me Girlie!"

She pressed the scented sheet softly to her lips, just as Ralph Ainslie entered the room.

"Boyo!" she cried, making a little run toward him and throwing her arms about his neck. "You dear, good fellow! And I've been behaving like a little wretch, haven't I? With you worrying so much over your business, and never once complaining! No, no," she protested, as he made an involuntary gesture of remonstrance, "it's all true, Boyo, every bit of it. And I've been, oh, such a naughty girl!"

Her moist eyes and his shirt front had approached such dangerous proximity that he was permitted to grin his perplexity above her head, unseen. Somehow, the scent of her hair tangled with his thoughts to a purpose, and recalled the golden days that he had well-nigh thrust away. Dear, patient, faithful Maud, still as trusting as the first time they had laid lips to lips! And she had mistaken the broken letter for her own! The pathos of the blunder softened him and helped consign the other woman to oblivion.

"There, there, Girlie. It's nobody's fault in the world but my own. I've been working too hard, and—"

"But it's my fault. I insist!" she protested.

"Then I must punish you by—ahem!—"

"Something nice?" Then, recollecting the letter: "And what were we going to do when you finished making the arrangements?"

"Europe," he lied, laconically. "I say, Girlie," he added, hurriedly, catching a glimpse of the open drawer and beginning to lead the retreat to the door, "let's not go home, but have dinner down town—"

"And after that the theatre!" she cried. "Just like old times!"

"Just a minute, Girlie," he said, at the elevator shaft. "I've forgotten something."

He hurried back to the office, closing the door carefully behind him. Then he applied a vesta to the envelope that had Bertha Something-or-Other written across its face. He poked the ashes about in the grate and swore softly at something several times, but when he swore it was the dark-eyed woman who was in his thoughts.



HATE

LOVE, having shot an arrow at a heart,
Repenting, tried to draw it forth; too late!
For Time had grown a barb upon the dart,
And ever since they call that arrow Hate.

ALOYSIUS COLL.



TOO FAR BEHIND

MILLY—I understand that Miss Elderly is getting to be very fast.
WILLY—Yes; but she'll never make up the time she has lost.

TO A BRIAR ROSE

(FOUND IN OCTOBER)

WHY, you belated, shy-eyed child of June!
 Are you a bit of sunset cloud left here?
 A memory of the days that passed too soon?
 A parting kiss imprinted by the year?

The sapphire skies are gone—did you not know?—
 And drearily sighs the north wind o'er the wold;
 The flowers of June have faded long ago.
 Only the woods are full of tarnished gold.

You lift your face, now Summer joys have fled,
 And all the world with Autumn's tears is rife,
 Like thoughts that linger with us of our dead,
 Or love that steals upon us late in life.

NEVA LILLIAN WILLIAMS.



DIVERSION

MRS. PLUMLY—Don't you get tired of always being loved by the same man?

MRS. PACER—But I'm not. Frequently my husband loves me.



UNSENTIMENTAL TOMMY

HE filled the cup quite to the brim,
 Sipped once, then proffered him the drink.
 I'm sure *she* quaffed the cup to *him*;
 But he, within the goblet's brim,
 Beheld another face more fair!
 He drank the nectar, though, I think,
 Because 'twas *there*.

ADELE DURAND HOLT.

BETWEEN NINETEEN AND TWO

By Wolcott LeCléar Beard

THE trouble began late one afternoon.

Seldon was blue. In fact, he was on the verge of despair and self-destruction and all the rest of it; for She had snubbed him again, or he thought she had, which came to the same thing. She was Polly Van Benschoten. I had known her always—used to superintend her mud pies. She had an income of her own, and a kind-hearted, sharp-tongued mamma; and these two facts frightened Seldon more even than Polly did, which is saying a great deal. He couldn't stand the strain, he said. He never intended to see her again.

"Bet you do within the week," drawled Greg. "Give you five to three; now come."

Seldon only shook his head and looked miserable.

"He doesn't dare take the bet," I said, hoping to rouse him. "In exactly four days there'll be a dance. He's invited, and he knows she'll be there."

"Suppose I'm going?" demanded Seldon. "Well, I'm not. I'd look well, wouldn't I, hanging around just to see that ass Chalmers talking to her fit to break his neck, and I never getting a chance the whole evening to slip in a word edgewise. That's what happened last time."

"Get her down here, then, and break your own neck talking to her," suggested Sam. "You needn't ask Chalmers. That'll put an extra zero in the wheel."

Seldon looked around the shabby room and made a despairing gesture.

"That's not a bad idea, just the same," said Jimmy, in reply to Sel-

don's gesture. "We can brace up the looks of the room here by clubbing our stuff. Then we'll get a lot of people down here who can do things—singing and monologues and the like; we know plenty—and then ask a lot of others to hear 'em. We can kill off a lot of people that way; dinners and things—those dances, for instance, that Seldon's growling about."

"But they wouldn't mix for sour apples, the people who'd do the things and the ones we'd ask down to hear 'em. And they'd have to mix," objected Seldon, dejectedly, yet with hope.

"Mix? They'd mix all right," said Jimmy. "They'd be such curiosities to each other, don't you see?"

"The audience would just revel in the giddy bohemianism of it all," remarked Baynes. "They'd talk about it for a month."

"Give 'em a feed, too," put in Sam. "More bohemianism. Real beer."

"Feed! I should say so!" exclaimed Greg, horrified.

"Paid your rent yet?" asked Baynes.

This was a very silly question. As it happened, we had not paid our rent for a couple of months or so; but we had frequently been farther behind than that, and there was never any trouble, for we had been a long time in the old Tenth street building. Baynes knew all this perfectly well, and with some heat we told him so.

"But the agent's away," said Baynes, "and the old sub-agent's ill. There's a new sub-agent in charge, and he doesn't know you fellows."

"Oh, well," I commenced, "Sel-

don and I both have some money coming in directly, so that'll be——”

“What the devil's that?” interrupted Seldon.

There was no need to listen. From the echoing corridor that led to our rooms there rose the growl of an angry man and the agonized yell of a dog.

“Ah, say, don't—don't!” cried the shrill voice of a boy. “Can't youse leave 'im alone? I'll get 'im out—I am gettin' 'im out. We was posin' fer Mr. Wallace, an' we's jus' got t'rough.”

Here the man said something we could not catch.

“I know it's de wrong side er de buildin'. We was lookin' fer anudder job. Leave 'im be. We'll go out. Leave 'im be, I say, er I'll push yer face in wid dis!”

The dog yelped again. There was a scream of anger from the boy, and a little scuffling. We all ran out into the passage. At the head of the west stairway, curled into a convulsive heap, lay a worthless yellow cur. His nose was in the air and his open jaws trembled, but only a faint whimper came from them. Over the body of the dog stood a small and dirty boy, struggling in the grasp of a man we had never seen before. In his hand the boy held a dust-pan, which I recognized as the property of the servant who every morning failed to clean our rooms.

“What'd you kick that dog for?” inquired Sam, going up to the man.

“What's that to you?” demanded the man.

By way of answer Sam grasped the man's collar with one hand and his trousers with the other. “Catch hold,” he said to Greg, who stood nearest.

“Do you know who I am?” shouted the man.

Sam did not know. He did not care a profanely small amount. He expressed this in a very few words, for Sam's vocabulary is not large.

“My name's Siegel,” said the man, “and I'll make it hot for you if——”

“All right,” answered Sam. “Ready, Greg? Come on, Siegel.”

Greg was ready. Between them he and Sam conveyed Siegel down the stairs in such a manner that only the tips of his toes touched them. Down both flights of stairs they led him, then around the passage to the front door, from which they ejected him with some emphasis and a warning not to return.

We were coming back, feeling on rather good terms with ourselves, when we met Baynes. He was laughing so hard that he had to lean against the wall. It annoyed us.

“Do you know who that man was you just threw out?” he managed to gasp. “That was Siegel.”

“Sure we knew it,” replied Sam. “He told us.”

“He told us his name was Siegel,” said Greg. “Who is he?”

“Who is he?” shrieked Baynes. “He's the new sub-agent I was telling you about.”

We were all rather sobered by this.

“Well, we kicked him out all right,” observed Sam, philosophically. “Maybe it'll do him good.” Then he led the way back to our studio.

The dog lay on the floor, with a folded rug under him. Close beside him knelt the boy, his dirty face streaked with white, where tears, of which he was evidently ashamed, had with difficulty ploughed their way. The fellows stood sympathetically about, but to them the boy paid no attention. His eyes were on the little moaning cur.

“Take a look at the dog, will you?” said Seldon. “I'm afraid he's badly hurt.”

I knelt down and examined it as gently as I could. There was little knowledge needed to tell how badly the kicks had injured the poor little brute.

“Say, youse don't t'ink he's go'n' ter croak, do youse?” asked the boy, as I looked up.

I did think so, and there was no use denying it. “I'm afraid he will,” I said. Then the boy looked so dis-

tressed that I added: "But we'll hope he comes out all right."

As if in answer to my speech, the dog whined again and tried to struggle to his feet, then fell back, shivered, and was dead.

"Never mind, Terry," said Seldon, kindly. "We know what hard luck it is, but you've just got to brace up and take it. There's no other way."

"Dat's right," acquiesced Terry, dismally. "But he was dead fine, dat mut. I got 'im w'en he wasn't no bigger'n me fist, an' I was awful stuck on 'im."

He tried bravely to keep back his sobs, but more tears would come, and were rapidly making fresh streaks down his cheeks. For a moment he stood looking down at the little yellow body, then turned his back toward us, and, walking to the window, leaned on the sill, looking out into the street. It seemed kinder not to take any notice of him just then, so we ostentatiously continued our conversation.

"When'll we have this shindig we were talking about?" asked Jimmy. "It ought to be soon. What'll it cost?"

Whereupon they got pencil and paper and began making an estimate of expenses and a list of what would be required. When we came to the eatables, Terry, still standing by the window, showed signs of interest. The other fellows noticed this, and nudged each other to call attention to it.

"We can get Slattery and Mary to serve the stuff," said Seldon, "but we ought to have more help than that. Good scheme to have a boy in buttons. Terry, how'd you like the job?"

Terry turned from the window. "A job here, to wait on youse?" he asked.

"Yes; to get into tight clothes with buttons all over them, and to open the door and so on. How'd you like it?" asked Seldon, laughing.

"Great!" said Terry.

After that he evidently considered himself a retainer of ours; and though

Seldon had been joking, neither he nor any of the rest of us had strength of mind sufficient to tell the boy that we were not in earnest. And besides, the idea was not such a bad one. Terry would cost very little, and might be made useful in a great variety of ways. He had no relatives that he knew of, so there need be no trouble on that score.

The very next morning, therefore, Seldon took Terry, together with all the money I had, as well as his own, and purchased a lot of things, chiefly a ready-made suit of dark-green cloth, resplendent with many rows of nickel-plated buttons. Then we stood Terry up in a big, flat bath-tub, and while one of us played a hose on him, the others scrubbed him with brooms until he was pink and sore, but very clean. After a solemn warning that, if he did not remain approximately in that condition, the dose would be repeated, Terry was permitted to array himself.

With his livery, Terry at once assumed charge of us all, and in a matter-of-fact way which left no room for an argument. His greatest responsibility, however, was our variety show, as he would call it. And we were fully committed to this show now, for Seldon had met Polly on the street, had told her of our plan, and she had approved.

Therefore, we hunted up our friends who could do stunts, to quote Terry again, and got these friends to promise to do them, and to meet a large number of other people who could not do them, but who would be glad to see them done. We also invested a large part of our credit—Terry's livery had taken about all our ready money—in a quantity of note-paper of a most superior variety, and sat down to write the invitations.

We had been at it for some time when Greg threw down his pen and announced that he was exhausted. The others instantly became affected in the same way, and nothing but beer, they said, could restore them. So Terry was sent out to get it, taking with him a tin pail concealed in a

hat-box, which really gave quite a patrician air to the whole proceeding. He returned, and, extracting the pail from the box, began, with a deftness evidently born of experience, to pour the beer into glasses. But we saw that he had something on his mind.

"Say," he observed, after a little, "I just seen dat mug what youse trun out. He asked me what was I doin' here."

"Did you tell him?" I asked.

"Naw, sir," said Terry, and went on pouring out the beer.

"It won't take him long to find out, though, what Terry's doing and who's employing him," said Greg.

"He knows it now," answered Terry. "He had a poiper, and he wanted me ter give it ter youse."

"Where is the paper?" I asked, rather anxiously. "Didn't you take it?"

"Naw, sir," said Terry, again. "I said youse didn't want nahtin' er his."

This was quite true; yet the uncertainty as to what this paper might be troubled us considerably. We sent Terry to find out, and he shortly returned with the paper in his hand. We knew it by sight only too well; it was a three-days' notice for us to quit our room, No. 19, for non-payment of rent.

We were quite accustomed to these notices, it is true; but formerly they had been matters of no great importance, merely reminders of rather a humorous nature that the agent wanted some money; and he always got it, sooner or later. But this, coming from Siegel, was another matter, and we all looked rather grave as Seldon tacked it to the wall where the others that we had received at different times were collected. Still, there was nothing for us to do but wait until our money came, so we finished writing the invitations and sent Terry out with them.

It was quite astonishing how many people accepted those invitations of ours. How the studio was to hold them all we had no idea. Though we measured the available floor space again and again, and each time nar-

rowed the territory allotted to each guest, there was a limit beyond which, without the aid of a hydraulic press, we could not go. Yet we were confident that we could manage it somehow, and so went ahead and had the rooms cleaned.

This was a matter involving considerable labor, but when at last it was done, with all the things of ours and the other fellows arranged about the room, it really looked very well; and we knew that the overwhelming bohemianism of the affair would excuse anything that might otherwise be thought amiss. Then that disgusting business of the three-days' notice came up again.

Our door was locked, for a wonder, and we were all busily sorting out wooden grocers' plates, upon which the supper was to be served—more bohemianism, combined with economy. Someone, without knocking, tried to open the door. Terry hurried to his post, and we heard him expostulating with somebody outside, saying that the gentlemen were busy with models and couldn't see no one. Then an unattractive young man forced his way into the room, and after depositing in Seldon's hand a document of a truly ominous appearance, he departed.

One after another we took the paper and read it. It was a summons to go somewhere and show cause why something or other should not happen. To all of us except Baynes, who looked concerned, the paper was quite unintelligible, but that it emanated from Siegel, and for that reason was probably malignant in its nature, was evident enough. Seldon tacked it on the wall with the rest. There was no other answer that we could give just then.

At last our arrangements were practically complete, and the affair itself was to take place on the following day. Even the chairs for the audience had been placed, and Terry was watching with a distrustful eye the man who was tuning the piano, when there came a knock at the door. It was not the single knock that always

heralded the advent of an initiate, but an imperious summons, many times repeated before Terry, with all his bristles standing, could get to the door and open it. We heard him demand with very scant civility to know what was wanted; then he was brushed aside, and Siegel entered with a companion, whom he announced as a deputy marshal or something of the kind.

The scene which followed was quite what we might have expected had we stopped to think that the summons, or whatever it was, called upon us to go to court the day before. How in the end we managed to get a concession of twenty-four hours in which to move our goods, I do not know, but imagine that the marshal granted it to us largely because it was fiercely opposed by Siegel. At all events, we did obtain this much grace, and Siegel and the marshal went away, leaving us alone.

We tried to put the best face we could upon the matter, but the best was very bad indeed. The boys sat down in the chairs we had provided for our expected guests and looked at each other in blank despair. Except Seldon, that is. He just hid his face in his hands and groaned. Perhaps it was rather harder on him than it was on the rest of us, but it was bad enough for us all.

"Well," said Jimmy at last, "we've got to do something. Recall the invitations, I suppose."

"There's no time now. Besides, you lost the list, and we can't make a new one," said I.

Jimmy denied having lost the list, and at any other time there would probably have been words about it, but now we were too discouraged to quarrel.

"But we've got to do something," he repeated. "How about our studio?"

"These rooms are too small, and ours are about one-third the size," said Baynes.

No one else had any suggestions to offer. Dinner time passed unnoticed and in silence, save when Seldon re-

marked that this affair was sure to get about; that we would be made a laughing-stock, and that he, for one, intended to leave the city and to stay away; and Sam told him not to be more of a fool than he could help.

"Well, we're in a bad hole, but there's no use starving over it," said Greg, at last. "Let's all go somewhere and have dinner together. Perhaps we can think of some plan then."

"We haven't got the price among us, and we won't have until those checks come," objected Baynes.

"Might pawn our dress clothes," suggested Seldon, bitterly. "It's the only use we can put them to that I can think of."

"Order dinner from the kitchen and eat here," said Sam. "You won't have to pay then until the end of the month, and we'll all be flush before that."

At this suggestion, Terry, who had been listening, brightened up visibly, and at a nod from me ran down stairs to order the dinner. He evidently considered himself the author of our misfortunes, and it weighed upon him. He was gone a long time, but that was nothing unusual for Terry. At last he strolled back into the room and carefully closed the door behind him.

"Say, dere's anudder room on de bottom floor what's lots bigger'n dis," he remarked. "It'd be fine fer dat variety show, and it hasn't got nobody in it. It's room 2. Slattery says he'll send der grub right up."

Sure enough, Slattery, the janitor, followed close on Terry's heels, balancing two big trays on his hands, while the chambermaid brought another. We listlessly pushed some of the chairs aside, pulled a table out into the room and laid the big drawing-board over it, upon which, with a sigh of relief, the janitor deposited the trays and helped us arrange the dishes.

"Here's them keys," he said, as soon as his hands were clear. "I didn't know ye'd taken room 2 till just now. 'Tis a far betther room fer the entertainment ye'r givin', but ye've

none so much time to move. Ye'll be wantin' me to help?"

For a very long minute no one spoke. At last I managed to pull myself together a little. "We haven't got much time," I gasped. "We'll have to begin right after dinner, and we'll hurry and get through. Come then."

"I'll be here, sorr," said Slattery, and vanished.

When he had gone we looked at each other in blank amazement. It was Terry who spoke first.

"Say," he observed, "we ain't got no nails to hang t'ings on de wall wid. Wouldn't I go out an' get some before de hardware store shuts up?" Then, without waiting for permission, he departed, leaving us to discuss the turn affairs had taken.

There was little use in our discussion, however. Of course, there was but one thing to do, and that was to thankfully accept the room thus miraculously offered; but how the miracle had come about we had not the least idea. Gradually we recovered ourselves and attacked the dinner, resolving to wait until Terry came back, so that we might ask him. When at last he did return, burdened with bundles of ironmongery, he made everything plain at once.

"We had ter go somewheres," he explained, "an' dat room was de best one dere was, so I tol' Slattery we'd take it, an' ter bring de key up ter youse, an' he done it."

It was delightfully simple.

Jimmy flapped his arms and crowed. "They can't put you out before to-morrow night. This is the only room you've been evicted from," said Baynes.

"Dey can't put youse out den," said Terry, swaggering up to the table in order to change the dishes. "Siegel, he won't know nahtin' about it, 'less you tell him—not before yer boodle comes, annyhow."

"That's so. There's no reason why Siegel should find out for some time, unless Slattery should happen to mention it to him."

"Slattery won't mention nahtin'," said Terry, positively.

We asked Terry his reasons for this positive statement, but he only inquired in return as to whether he should "begin to yank some er de stuff outer de room or would he chase Slattery up stairs first?" We told him to request Slattery to come to us, and he did so.

Our labors carried us far into that night, and we were at work again hours before we ordinarily had our breakfasts. By noon everything was finished, and we could lie about and rest, serene in the knowledge that both our work and Siegel were done, for the time being.

Yet there was a strain of uneasiness that ran through this knowledge. It lasted through the afternoon and into the evening, when we were dressed and waiting for the first guests to appear. We had each a carefully suppressed apprehension as to how and when Siegel would break out next. At last the door-bell rang, and Seldon went to see that Terry was at his post. In a moment he returned, running, and holding two envelopes in his hand.

"I just looked into the office as I came by, and these were in the box," he called. "I believe they're our checks."

And they were.

Throwing on our hats and coats, we tore down to the corner and got Johnny to cash the checks for us; then we went to Slattery. We paid all the rent that we owed, and also a month in advance for the new room, and made him give us receipts.

Many of the guests had arrived when at last we returned. The rooms really looked very well, and my soul was at peace as we went into them, with the lights and the well-dressed people and the buzz of conversation and laughter. Seldon and I circulated our good news among the other fellows, and then Seldon took his station by the door, for She had not yet arrived. When She did come Seldon was off duty for a moment, so I met her first and introduced old Mr. Wallace to her as he followed her in. He took possession of her instantly, and

Seldon could only follow disconsolately behind.

The affair was really going off remarkably well. Fitzhugh, the basso of some opera company or other, sang his great song about a ghost which made itself desperately unpleasant to some person who was not specified, and gave a coon song as an encore. There were a couple of good dancers, more singing, and Drake—the brother of the Drake that married Amy—got off his monologue, and did it very well. Then the actors mixed with the audience and were introduced between the numbers. Everything was very bohemian, indeed, and quite wicked in a thoroughly innocuous way.

Terry, standing by the door, beamed with joy, as well he might, for he was singled out by Polly, after she got away from old Wallace, and she had gone and asked him all sorts of questions, talking to him for a long time. I saw her, though I was too far away to hear what she said. Then, as she passed me, she gave my hand a little squeeze.

"I think it's perfectly splendid what you did for that boy," she said. "I hope he was hurt when you kicked him out of the door—the man, I mean, not the boy. Where's Mr. Seldon?"

Seldon had been in hot pursuit, but, owing to the crowd, had only succeeded in getting as far as the door. A man who had begun to sing interrupted himself for a moment, disturbed by a voice that was raised in anger outside. It was the same voice that we had heard before. Seldon went out and closed the door behind him; then opened it again and, sticking his head inside, beckoned wildly for me. I was already making toward him as rapidly and inconspicuously as I could, and Sam was working in the same direction.

"Keep still for a minute, can't you, and listen to me," I heard Seldon say; then we opened the door and dodged out into the passage, where the tables, holding the refreshments, had already been placed. Siegel was leaning against one of them, and it was in danger of upsetting.

"Get away from that table," growled Sam.

"Well," said I, at the same moment, "what is it you want? Make it short—and don't raise your voice as you did just now."

Siegel was angry, but with an effort he controlled himself. Greg and Baynes slid unobtrusively out of the door.

"What do I want?" asked Siegel, with a labored effort at a sarcastic manner, "I want—"

Here I interrupted him. "By the way, Seldon," I said, "Polly was just asking for you—wanted to see you."

I spoke only in order to interrupt Siegel, and said the first thing that came into my head. I thought it would make him angry, and it did, but it also caused Seldon to vanish before I could get the words out of my mouth. Then I turned to Siegel again.

"Well?" I asked.

Siegel roared. "What I want is just—"

"Speak low!" snapped Greg, so shortly that Siegel involuntarily obeyed.

"I want you to get yourselves and your stuff and that gang out the room," he said. "If you ain't out in fifteen minutes I'll have you thrown into the street, see? You'll start now, and I'm going in there to see that it's done."

"In there? Nit," observed Terry.

"Are you aware that these gentlemen had twenty-four hours—" commenced Baynes, in his most soothing manner.

"They had it to get out of the building in," said Siegel.

"Or to pay their rent," Baynes continued, blandly. "They have paid it. Then it occurred to them that they'd rather have this room, so they took it, paying a month's rent in advance. There are the receipts, signed by an authorized person, as you know. You can send the lease up in the morning. Go away now."

But Siegel was very angry. He declared, in a voice unnecessarily loud, that he would not go away. He took

the receipts that I held out, glanced at the signatures, and then tore them into pieces, which he threw on the floor. Sam wriggled his shoulders as if he were about to wrestle, and I heard the lining of his dress-coat crack.

"Go on back," he said to us, in a tone of entreaty. "Go on; do! The people inside won't know what's become of you. They'll think that something's wrong."

But I appealed once more to Siegel. "You've seen the receipts," I said. "You can come again, if you like, in the morning, but you'd much better go quietly now."

"Er else you'll get fired out again," supplemented Terry.

Siegel was beyond prudence now. He announced his intention of bodily ejecting our guests, and was so ill-advised as to take a step toward the door.

"Well, you had your choice, you know," said Sam.

The song was nearly finished when

we all, except Sam and Terry, returned to the room. Outside a series of bumps sounded, exactly as if a heavy body were being propelled rapidly, though in a somewhat spasmotic manner, along the passage; and the voice of Siegel, which at first was loud, grew rapidly fainter in the distance. We heard the front door slam, and a moment later Sam returned. His face was flushed, but it wore a cheerful smile.

Seldon was quite unconscious of all this. He was sitting beside Polly, who was looking intently at the stage, and he was looking at her with an idiotic expression of utter bliss that told its own story.

The song was finished, and there was a rattle of applause, but Seldon's face was still turned toward Polly, and it wore the same expression still. Therefore I knew, and anyone who glanced at him might have learned, that all was joy within him, and why.



MIDNIGHT MADNESS

HER lips were burning-close, and a divine,
Clear light shone in her eyes, that seemed to say
(That which her tongue might not), "Yea, lover mine,
You may."

Methought, "I'll seize the occasion ere it slips,"
And swiftly as her luring glances spoke
I stooped to touch the heaven of her lips—
And woke!

CHARLES FITZHUGH TALMAN.



DEPENDS ON CIRCUMSTANCES

COBWIGGER—How many miles does his automobile go before it stops?
MERRITT—Thirty, except when it runs away.

THE LITTLE WOMAN

By E. Hough

AT the supper party were the prima donna of the Traumerei Opera Company; two lesser lights of the stage; Barrington, of the *Age*; Hopkinson, of the *Voice*; Casper Long, of the Star Theatre; J. Cortez De Lancy and a reporter for the *Elite News*.

J. Cortez was the worse for his cups. For the second time he rose, leaned across the table and touched the diva's shoulder. Up to that time no one had paid any attention to his increasing familiarity. Now Barrington flushed and, extending his hand, forced J. Cortez down into his seat. The young man sprang up, striking out blindly. Barrington lost his patience.

"Well, then!" he exclaimed, frowning, and pushed J. Cortez back into his chair with such suddenness that he sat dazed.

Of all at the table but two were cool. The diva came over and sat at Barrington's side.

"Come," she said, laying a hand upon his sleeve, "you're going to be angry. Take me out. Get a carriage."

"I'm not angry," said Barrington, still frowning, the veins in his neck beating. "I've got to take care of this little beast."

"Think of me," said the diva. "Come. Get my coat."

He obeyed.

"You're strong," said she, as he assisted her with the wrap. Barrington smiled and shook her playfully by the lapels. She was a large woman, but felt herself move under his hand as if it cost him no effort. "I'm disposed to be afraid of you,"

she added, irrelevantly. "I've always had such a contempt for men."

"Afraid of me?" said Barrington. "I hardly—"

"Oh, dear me, not afraid of your temper. Only afraid you might learn my secret."

Barrington looked at her for a moment. "I know it now," he said, quietly. The diva flushed for the first time.

"Oh, no, you don't," said she.

They had drawn aside and were now able to step away from the confused group without attracting attention.

"I know your secret," said Barrington. "It's this: You pass as a cynical woman, a woman not to be impressed by any man, able and content to get along in the world without any affection or any assistance from any man in the world. That's what you seem, or what you wish to seem. What you *are* is quite a different thing."

"And what am I, please?"

"You are, properly and exactly speaking, a great blonde baby."

They stood in silence for a time. At last she said, slowly:

"I shouldn't wonder if you were right. You've come near guessing it—too near guessing it—for us all."

"And you want to lean, and to be petted, and to be taken care of, and to be freed of thinking."

"No man ever did," said she, ungrammatically but unmistakably.

"But some man will."

They were at the door facing the curb, at which stood the line of carriages. Barrington flushed, fumbled and paused.

"I—ah, well, the best way is the straightest," he said. "I've not a cent."

"Nor I," said the diva, like a gentleman, seeing that it would be easy to embarrass him. "It's lovely. Let us walk."

So they passed on up the crowded, garish street, actors in the comedy of life.

"So you're 'broke?'" said the diva.

"Yes, I spent my last silver for my rose," and he touched the flower in his lapel.

"Glad you got it," said his companion. "I hate a man who wears a white flower. It's like the white feather to me." She bent over, her hand upon the sleeve of his coat.

"You've got on a patched glove, haven't you?" she said.

"Yes," said he, shortly.

"Mended?"

"Yes."

"By a woman?"

"Yes."

"It's like you to be truthful," said the diva, sighing, after a little pause. "The old story, I suppose. The city is so full of it. Yet you wonder that I have never cared for a man. Why should I? Why should any woman? Why does she?"

"She's so little," said Barrington, his voice changing. "And I—well—"

"You love her," said the diva, finishing for him, after a pause.

Barrington remained silent.

"Yet you go out for an evening like this, with all sorts of persons, with Kittie Graves, with that fool De Lancy—with me," she added, bitterly.

"Oh, now, be fair, at least with yourself," said Barrington.

"Be fair!" said the diva, slowly. "That is just what I am. That is just what I have always tried to be. If I had not, I might at least have married again, and to advantage. Or I might have had a larger salary."

"I know," said Barrington. "You've been one among a thousand. Don't think I never knew, or that I did not admire you for it. It's rare enough."

They walked on along the city street through a hectic hour, talking little, but not needing to talk much. At length it became a question of parting.

"You've learned my secret," said the diva, sighing. "You can understand a woman, it seems. I might as well tell you, or you would see it, anyway—I should learn to love you if I saw much of you. So we must not meet. You're strong; that's what a woman likes, first. Now, be fair. That's what a woman likes, too. Be fair to us all—to the other woman. We're all alike. We're all babies, wanting to be comforted. God knows, a woman needs comforting, the way life runs!"

"Now, we can't be together," she resumed, slowly and evenly; "we mustn't, dear boy. If you had me to love you, you wouldn't be any better off, and you wouldn't be any nearer the end of the problem. We women are much alike. Now, I'm sending you back to her, where you belong. You seem a grand fellow, you're so strong; and I like you so much. I'm a good fellow myself, you know."

"Remember, dear boy, we may all be full of the primeval passions—being a woman, I neither affirm nor deny—but to-day is to-day. We're in the wagon of to-day, and if we fall out, it is into the mire, whether the mire be naturally or only artificially muddy. Fall out, if you must. You're savage, and I admit I love you for being so, as women always have loved and always will love the savage—though no woman would confess it, except when parting. Fall out of the wagon, my boy, if you will. But do you want to pull a weak, warm-hearted little woman with you? Would you?"

"Yes, we're all alike. We're all babies—we always will be, God help us! We'll always be that way. But you love this little woman—I know you do, from what you do not say. Go back to her and be a man, and I'll—I'll love you all the more. Go and marry this little woman, and if God ever sends you a baby, I think I shall

love it to death, for you, because you were a man."

"You're pretty plain," said Barrington. To this she paid no attention. He groaned in a hoarse, suppressed way, his face set.

"Yes?" said she, waiting.

"It's—it's partly the money," said he. "How can a man marry—?"

"Now you make me angry with you," said the other. "It is not the part of a man like you to talk that way. There is just as much sky and just as much earth to-day as there was when the first sweet woman loved the first strong man. Of course, you've been foolish with your money."

"I've no capital—"

"Oh, you coward! Here, then, I'll give you all the capital you need. See!"

She had fumbled in her muff and fallen upon a pencil, which she tore from its tablet and handed to him.

"Take it," said she. "I know very well it's capital enough for you."

The man began to straighten up as he listened.

"You—you're a good fellow, that's what you are," said he, chokingly. "I can't begin to pay you for—for—"

"Yes," said she, "you can. Wait."

She loosened the rose from his coat.

"We must go," said she, softly. "Tell me when it's going to be?"

"To-morrow," said he, with a snap of his jaws. "To-morrow, if the little woman will, and as soon as we can find the minister. Good-bye."

"Good-bye, old boy."



QUEEN MARGUERITE

THE Queen of France came riding by
And rivaled sunshine that shone on her—
Fair Marguerite, and round her nigh
Were all her noble Maids of Honor.

Alain Chartier, the bard of love,
Lay on a bank in slumber deep;
The Queen's face bent his face above—
She kissed the poet in his sleep.

Then 'mongst the Maids a murmur ran:
"That ugly man! How could she do it?"
She said: "I did not kiss the man,
Only the mouth—sweet songs ran through it."

I'd ask no other meed of praise
Than have been poet in those days.

GEORGE BIRDSEYE.



AN EXTRAORDINARY CASE

HAWKINS—I see a man out West rescued a widow from drowning, and she married him in three days.

ROBBINS—What caused the delay?

WITH A PHOTOGRAPH

TAKE, love, the picture that I send,
 And if the power of art
 Could give this shadow of myself
 A voice, the lips would part,
 And tell you that, beneath the fur,
 The roses, and the lace,
 My heart is but a living frame
 That holds your cherished face.

MINNA IRVING.



JUDGING BY APPEARANCES

MRS. LEO HUNTER—Why are you so suspicious of Count von Squint?
 He can't help being cross-eyed.
 MR. HUNTER—I know it; but he looks crooked.



A CAREFUL ESTIMATE

SHE—I am afraid this hammock isn't strong enough.
 CLERK—It is guaranteed to hold 250 pounds.
 SHE—But I want one that will hold 255.



CHAPPIE'S LITTLE JOKE

CHAPPIE (*out rowing*)—I can't swim. Can you?
 She—No; not at all.
 CHAPPIE—No? Then we must be in the same boat.

LOOSE BEADS

By Claire K. Alden

IT was raining at Lone Beach. A man and a woman were walking swiftly under an umbrella, that threatened every moment to reverse itself.

"Don't try to keep it open; it will be a perfect wreck," she said.

"I don't care for that," said he, "but I hate to be conquered by an umbrella!"

She laughed. "It isn't the umbrella that balks you, but the wind. You can't expect to control the elements. You won't allow yourself to be conquered by anything."

"I beg your pardon, Miss Wainwright. I have been conquered completely this Summer——"

"*Veni, vidi*" and the rest," she said, lightly. The umbrella was closed at this point and they hurried along, the rain beating into their faces. Both faces wore a look of happiness. There was usually a little crease between her eyes, a thoughtful wrinkle up and down, but it was scarcely visible today.

He looked intently at her and saw the color come, flooding her cheeks and creeping behind her ears. Neither spoke for several moments; then she said:

"I thought we agreed to be comrades, nothing more. It is delightful to have a chum. I should not know what to do with a—sweetheart."

"I would teach you, Ernesta," he said, gravely.

"Don't! Please call me 'Bob.' I have been perfectly happy since you called me 'Bob' and I called you 'Adoniram.' That was such a homely name that I could not put a bit of tenderness into it, even if I felt senti-

mental, which I never do. I felt so safe calling you Adoniram, plain Adoniram!"

"And I have been called 'plain Adoniram' long enough. I'm disposed to make a frightful row."

"What have I done to excite your wrath?" she exclaimed. "Here we have gone along peacefully and contentedly all Summer, and I have had a most delightful time—the happiest Summer I've ever known. Now you begin to pick flaws in our friendship."

"Not that," he answered, hastily, "but the time is shortening. Can't you be serious?"

"Life is a joke," said she, holding up her face and drinking in the rain as if she enjoyed it.

He looked at her curiously, then said: "What sort of creature are you, anyway?"

"You are too polite," she retorted, "to say 'what manner of beast.' Then, in an insinuating manner: "In what way am I different from other women of your acquaintance?"

"In a thousand ways. You are frank and fearless, wholesome and sweet to the heart's core. Not all frills and furbelows and cheap perfume."

She laughed and replied, mockingly: "Then all a woman needs to win your esteem is to eschew perfume, tell the truth, and shame his Satanic Majesty?"

"You haven't told me the truth, after all," said he, "but, on the other hand, you haven't told me any lies. A woman with eyes like yours couldn't tell lies."

"What a pity! A lie is so convenient sometimes." As she said this

she left his side and ran toward the beach, where, scrambling upon a rock, she stood like a spirit of mischief. She beckoned, and he followed.

"What now, you will-o'-the-wisp?" he said, climbing to her side.

"Sit there." She motioned him off to a niche in the rock.

"Absurd!" he protested. "Do you expect me to sit on that wet, slimy rock? I prefer to stand."

"Then stand just far enough off to receive the right effect. I am going to recite."

He moved away and stood where he could best see the changing expression of her animated face. "It is called 'A Mood,'" she said. "Do you know it?"

"I know many moods, but not this particular one, perhaps. If it's a woman's mood, God pity the man!"

"God had need to pity him," she said, gravely. Then began:

"Oh, to be alone,
To escape from the work, the play,
The talking every day.
To escape from all I have done
And all that remains to do.
To escape—yes, even from you,
My only love, and be
Alone and free.

"Could I only stand
Between gray moor and gray sky,
Where the winds and the plovers cry,
And no man is at hand;
And feel the free wind blow
On my rain-wet face, and know
I am free—not yours, but my own—
Free and alone!

"For the soft firelight,
And the home of your heart, my dear,
They hurt, being always here.
I want to stand upright,
And to cool my eyes in the air,
And to see how my back can bear
Burdens—to try, to know,
To learn, to grow."

Here she stopped. Her whole soul had been poured out in the touching poem that she had taken to heart.

"Go on," was his only comment.

She flushed and said: "That is all."

"That is the first lie you ever told me. You have suppressed one stanza."

"Come along," she said, going back to the road. "Do you think I have not the courage to say it?"

"I think," he said, "that you have the courage to say anything. But don't say it, dear, if it hurts. I did not mean to be cruel."

Then she turned her face toward him, and with her wistful eyes looking straight into his, she finished the poem:

"I am only you!
I am yours, part of you, your wife!
And I have no other life.
I cannot think, cannot do;
I cannot breathe, cannot see;
There is 'us,' but there is not 'me.'
And, worst, at your kiss I grow
Contented so."

"Would it be that way?" he asked. "I would try not to make it so. I know the wild bird in your nature, and I would not cage you. You should be almost as free as you are now."

"Almost as free as I am now?" said she. "How free do you think I am?"

"I don't know. I don't know anything about you. You have never hinted about your past. You have had no communication with the world outside Lone Beach all Summer, to my knowledge."

"True," she said, sadly. "You see, I slipped my moorings. I was anchored on a shore where there were rocks that threatened to wreck me and—my reason. I meant to tell you before. I had not the courage. I wanted just one chance to live and breathe, as some women do all their lives. I have been so cramped, so fettered, until this glorious Summer! I don't mind telling you I love you. Don't touch me! You have no right. I'm married—respectably married. He went abroad this Summer, and I escaped. I married him for a home. Many women do the same thing."

"Not such women as you," he said, fiercely.

"Yes, such a woman as I was five years ago. I have lived an eternity since. There are extenuating cir-

cumstances," she pleaded, pitifully, stumbling along in her blind distress, until he held out his hand and steadied her. Unconsciously she slipped her arm into his, as she had done many times when they had been out in the dusk together, and he left it there, half protectingly resting his hand on hers, which trembled like a leaf.

"I have left him—he is in Europe—I don't intend ever to go back! I hate the publicity of a divorce, and he agreed to a separation. I wanted a long rest, a change, to get the bitter taste out of my experience. I have not flirted with you, Mark. I would not let you say one word of love—I warned you in the very beginning. I couldn't come here with a placard on my back with the inscription thereon: 'I am a wife about to separate from my husband. Beware of me!' I wanted to be my old self, my unmarried self. I took my girlhood name. 'Miss' prevents so many inquiries that 'Mrs.' provokes. I have tried to tell you a dozen times. I knew that I ought to do so when—when—"

"Well?" he interrupted.

"You don't help me a bit! You have always been good and kind to me until now. You're a man, just like other men."

"To be sure. Did you think I was a god?" He smiled. "Not that, for you did not kneel down and worship me."

"In my heart," she said, turning her head away shyly and looking off at the dull, gray waste of waters, "I always held you many degrees higher than other men I have known."

They turned into a narrow path that led to an old-fashioned farmhouse. A pleasant-faced, middle-aged woman greeted them at the door.

"I have been worried about you, children," she said, "out in this drenching rain. You look pale, dear. You are not chilled, I hope?"

"Miss Wainwright is never chilled, though she is sometimes chilling. She is a water-sprite, a Lorelei. She

sits on a rock and lures men on to destruction and—" As the elder woman hustled away for dry slippers and to place an extra log on the hearth, Hazleton leaned toward the younger woman, who was trying to escape up stairs, and finished—"she has wrecked my happiness."

"Not if you can talk about it," she said, looking back over her shoulder as she ran up stairs.

Tea was a quiet meal. Mrs. Everett had discreetly retired from the sitting-room and Miss Wainwright was rocking in a low chair on the hearth. It was still raining, but Mark Hazleton passed the open door into the hall with his heavy boots on and an umbrella. Miss Wainwright looked up, flushed a little, then said: "Going out again?"

He came into the room and stood leaning against the mantel, looking down into her face, half-obscured in the shadow.

"I had thought of it," he said, "because—well, because the house is small, and I might be in your way, under the circumstances; but if you bid me stay, I obey. There are many things that I want to talk about; questions I should like to ask. You see, Ernesta, I can't give you up all at once. Perhaps I can by piecemeal. If you are married, if you have led me on, I am still interested in you and your future. I want to talk about it."

"And so do I," she said, rising and taking the umbrella from his hand and hunting up his slippers in the hall closet. There had been such a home-like intercourse between them all Summer that she could hardly believe, even then, that the happy chapter in her life volume was ended.

He drew a rocker to her side, saying: "How near does the law allow?"

"As near as you care to come," she answered. "Am I to blame because we drifted together into this house this Summer, and happened, in the absence of more attractive metal, to draw toward each other? You act as if I alone were to blame. Had I told you that I was married, at first,

what then? Would that have been a wall between us, if we both had wanted to scale it?"

"We should have started out differently had I known. I should not have allowed myself to think of you in the way that I do," he answered.

"Then with *you*," she said, sarcastically, "love is a matter of will, not impulse. If you wish to love me, you do; if it would be undesirable so to do, you let me severely alone."

"Not so, and you know it. I am not a wooden image, a puppet, a marionette, to be worked with strings! I am flesh and blood, heart and soul, passionate—as passionate as you are!"

The hot blood rushed to her cheeks, but she denied nothing. For a moment there was silence, then she stretched out her hand and said, pleadingly: "Take it, please, as a sign that there is friendship still between us. We have never quarreled before, only squabbled. Why should this, our last evening together, maybe, be spoiled by bickerings? I'm to blame, all to blame."

Taking her hand and holding it close, he said: "No, a thousand times no. I'm a hot-headed rascal. You are not going away, surely? Don't do that! You love this place; every blade of grass, every throb of the sea, is dear to your heart. If one *must* go, let it be me; but why must either of us?"

"Can you break a costly vase in a thousand pieces," she answered, "and patch it together, and set it up again, and keep people from seeing the cracks? Can you and I live in the same house with this between us and be ourselves? I hate a mask! I will not wear one; it is hot and uncomfortable. That was the delightful part of it—the freedom."

"But you are wearing a mask all the time," said he, reproachfully.

"Upon my soul," she said, looking up earnestly, "I often forgot that I was a married woman. Don't raise your eyebrows in that way; it is unbecoming. It is my weakness—or strength, I don't know which—to face the inevitable and make the best of everything; and the best of every-

thing this Summer has been the knowledge that my friends might travel from Dan to Beersheba and not find me, so no one could trouble me. I am sure I left no clue—"

"A messenger, Miss Wainwright," interrupted Mrs. Everett, who had knocked twice and now ventured to open the door.

"A message for me? It can't be! No one knows where I am. I—I don't understand it."

A foreshadowing of what was coming had taken away all her self-possession. She turned pale, her lips quivered, and the tears began to gather in her eyes. Grasping the situation, Mark Hazleton took the message from the boy and signed.

Mrs. Everett conducted the boy to the door, and Miss Wainwright and Hazleton were once more alone together.

"I am weak," she said, swaying as she rose and crossed the room to the lamp-lit corner. "Will you read it for me?"

His quick glance at once divined the contents, and for a moment he hesitated, but for a moment only.

"I am ill with an incurable disease, possibly of long standing, hopeless. Will you come, Ernesta?"

"LOUIS STRANGE."

"My husband!" she gasped; then she steadied herself. "Will you help me to decide?"

"I will help you to do anything," said Hazleton, looking compassionately into her white face. "But of all men, I should be the last to influence you against your better judgment."

"And that is," she said, simply, "to go to him. To drag out, perhaps, the rest of my life with him—and disease. And you don't know, you could never imagine, how loathsome disease is to me. I do not know what makes me so sensitive; it must be constitutional. It is very hard to overcome. Did you ever know such a weak creature?"

"I have known many," he said, placing his hand protectingly on her

bowed head. "I hardly see, though, how you can be of use to him, feeling as you do; I mean in a material way. Of course, your presence and sympathy would be very consoling and comforting."

"You will not believe me, I suppose, but really I am a very good nurse. I get used to it, you see, after the very first. I know his ways—I thought—oh, I thought I had done with him forever, but that is the way with our mistakes, we can never correct them nor lose sight of them; they keep cropping up when we least expect it. I wonder how he found me? Oh, you don't know—you don't know what the outlook is!"

"Dreary enough and hard enough—too hard for you, dear! Isn't there some way you can reconcile your conscience to forego the sacrifice? This separation of which you spoke—was that a law affair, or between your two selves?"

"Only an agreement between us. I am as much his wife to-day by law as I was the day I married him. More's the pity, and yet—I could not go to him if we were divorced, could I?"

"No; that would have been a way out."

"Yes," she said, wearily, "but if he had sent me that appeal I should have gone, I think, wife or no wife. You can't live with a man without finding out his weaknesses—the little things that fret him, the subjects that must be avoided, the arts and artifices that please, the oil to pour upon the troubled waters. I know Louis Strange. The most pitiful thing about him is his fear of sickness and death. I should be a fiend to desert him now, whatever he may have done to make my life a torment."

"You are brave! Go, with my blessing—yet, somehow, I would rather yield you up to any man than him."

"I must answer this," she said.

"You must telegraph," said Hazleton.

"Yes," she said; "he will be eager to hear. He was always so impatient. I must do it at once."

"I will carry it," said Hazleton, rising.

She rose, too, and wrote the message. It was very brief, simply this:

I will start to-morrow.

ERNESTA.

"I will go with you," she said, hurrying on her cloak and hat. "It seems as if I should stifle here. I want one more walk—in the rain with you. Oh, what a Summer this has been! I shall have a lifetime to think of it. I don't know whether I am wicked or not; I suppose I am. I can't help wishing that this were the end of it all—life and everything. I could bear to go now!"

They were out of doors. "Don't open the umbrella," said Ernesta. "I like the drip, drip, drip of the rain."

They hurried along with scarcely a word exchanged between them.

"It makes me think of Jean Ingelow's 'Divided,'" he said, finally, looking into her flushed, rain-wet face. "That poem was always strangely fascinating to me."

"To me, too," she answered; "but just now there was running through my head—you know how a poem comes to mind when you are most agitated or distressed—that woman's wail, 'A Woman's Wish'—'Would I were lying in a field of clover!' You know this part, the refrain:

"And I am tired, so tired of rigid duty!
So tired of all my tired hands find to do!
I yearn, I faint, for some of life's free
beauty,

Its loose beads with no straight string
running through.

I've had very few 'loose beads' in my life. It's a rope now!"

"I wish I could help you, my girl. God knows I do, and He let us come together. There's only one way. It has been hammering at me ever since I knew. Why can't we go off together? You have no one to care but him, and he only wants you for a slave and servant. While I—"

"Don't!" she cried.

"Let me finish! Words can't hurt you. You *shall* hear. I love you. We are only sure of this life—why

not live it, then, to the fullest extent in harmony with our desires? I am not fettered. I am not tied here, there or anywhere. It does not mean poverty nor privation. We can go to Europe, Asia, Africa, where you will—just to be together! Think of it, Ernesta!"

"I do think of it," she said, pitifully, "but you know as well as I do what that together means. It means crime, guilt, disgrace, fear, loathing, finally; *loathing*, because we have dragged each other down. This is our last evening together for many years, perhaps forever. Let's be good. Think of the tragedies this very crisis in many men's and women's lives has brought about. Think of the shame, the disgrace of it all! I tell you, Mark, we are cowards if we do not face it—face it bravely."

"My little angel," he said, touching her forehead with his hand and brushing back the straying locks, "forgive me; I was mad. And yet I wish you would not send that to-night; wait until to-morrow. Who knows what the morrow will bring forth?"

"I dread the morrow," she said, wearily. "I have grown so accustomed to this life here, this freedom from care, these quiet country roads, the restful sea, this companionship! I do not think there are a half-dozen persons in the world that I should like to be with all the time."

They were nearing the little station that was confectioner's, post-office and telegraph office all in one. He protested against her sending the message without further consideration; she persisted; his arguments were strong, however, and finally she became carried away by his reasoning and tore up the slip of paper. Then they turned homeward.

"Careful there," he said, steadying her as she stepped across a bridge of rough sleepers covering a brook; "that's an ugly place."

With a little of her old spirit in voice and eyes, she turned upon him and swayed purposely. "It is lovely, it is dangerous: all dangerous things

are fascinating. I like to stand on the edge of a steep cliff and look over; I like to ride behind an unbroken colt down a steep hill; I like a fire near by, just near enough to fear it; I like to be alone in the dark; I like a thunder-storm when I am out of doors, a hail-storm and wild wind. I hate tame monotony!"

Then she turned her earnest face toward him and continued: "I like you, because I fear you, sometimes; not fear of bodily harm, or torment, but the feeling that your will can master my will. I tell you this, because it may comfort you when I am gone, for I am going somewhere. If I do not go to him I shall go from you."

"What a happy life we might have had together if you had not made that first mistake!"

"Don't! I shall never feel the rain on my face again but that I shall think of you. You will be in every book I read, every song I sing. God forgive me for talking so when Louis Strange is suffering! I am a wretch!"

For the rest of the way she was silent. They entered the house, weary in body and mind. She said "Good-night" softly, as she took the lighted lamp from his hand, and he watched her up the stairs. She turned at the top and looked back at him, smiling.

It was a long night. At first he could not sleep, but at length, in sheer exhaustion, he drifted off. He had a strange dream. Ernesta was out alone in the rain; she seemed to be in distress; he heard her calling him; he could not reach her; she called again—more faintly; he tried to go, but some unseen giant force held him back. Again! This time the agony in her voice was blood-chilling; he made a mighty effort and awoke. A door creaked, a blind swung, then all was silent. He lay awake and listened. A minute later he heard a step in the hall. He looked at his watch; it was twelve o'clock.

"Mr. Hazleton!" It was Mrs. Everett's voice.

"What?" he inquired, springing from the bed. Pulling on his trou-

ters and thrusting his arms into his coat, he hurried to the door.

There stood Mrs. Everett, as pale as a ghost. "She is gone!" she gasped. "I can't find her anywhere. I was uneasy about her—"

"Who—who is gone? Not Miss Wainwright?"

"I can't find her," Mrs. Everett wailed; "I have hunted everywhere."

"Impossible!" By this time they were on their way to Ernesta's room. The bed had not been slept in; she had evidently written another telegram, for writing materials were on the table.

"She went to send a telegram, I think," he said to the affrighted Mrs. Everett, "but I don't understand why she has not returned. I must go at once and search for her. I can think of nothing but an accident. Don't tremble so!"

Mrs. Everett sank helpless into a chair and Hazleton hurried out of the house. It was still raining. Heedless of wind or weather, he rushed down the path and took the road that he and she had traveled over a few hours before. He hardly knew what he feared.

Just then he came to the little rough bridge where he and Ernesta had held their jesting conversation. On one side a narrow footing sloped down a steep hill. He peered over and started back; surely there was something there among the bushes! "Help!" he cried, as he clambered down, swinging from branch to branch of a slender tree half-way down the slope.

He heard an answering call, "I'm coming," and a young man, a belated traveler, came to his assistance. Held by some branches that had caught in her dress, Ernesta lay, pale and still. He knelt beside her, hardly giving a thought to his unsafe position.

"My God! Speak to me, Ernesta!" he cried.

Between them they raised her from the ground and carried her to the nearest house. The doctor was summoned, but before he arrived Ernesta

recovered consciousness and assured Hazleton that she felt no injury save in the right ankle, which was swelling rapidly.

"You see how weak I am," she said, "to faint from so slight an injury. This complicates matters still more. I cannot go to him just now. It's a reprieve for me, but I pity Louis Strange."

"It is best not to move her," said the doctor to Hazleton. "It is a badly sprained ankle, and it will take some time to mend."

After making arrangements with the mistress of the house for the temporary accommodation of the unexpected guest, Hazleton went back to Ernesta. "Dictate a message to me," he said, "and I promise you it shall be sent."

So over the wires went a brief statement of Ernesta's condition, and in her heart was a grateful acknowledgment for a lengthening of her furlough, even though she suffered bodily.

Not a day passed that Hazleton did not appear with flowers, a magazine, his violin and a new piece of music, or a box of confections.

"You are spoiling me," she protested; "you are making the future doubly hard." Then he wrote this little song, which he set to music and dedicated it to "Bob:"

LOVE IS ENOUGH

The night is lovely, and we are together;
Let us enjoy this hour without a thought
Of gathering clouds or to-morrow's weather.
Let us drink the cup that Fate has brought.
Why shadow glad to-days with sad to-morrows?
Why look ahead at all? This hour to me
Shall hold no tinge of parting, grief or sorrow.
Only the present joy my eyes shall see.

"No one would suspect you of being 'Bob,'" he said.

"To-morrow," said Ernesta, one night when they sat together on the veranda, to which Hazleton had

wheeled her chair, "I am to be allowed to bear my weight on my lame ankle. It will not be many days now before I am well again, and then—"

"Little girl," said Mark, tenderly, "why don't you trust? Providence interposed once—"

"Who is that?" she asked, peering

from her shelter at a boy approaching. Hazleton went down the path, and the boy handed him a telegram; it was addressed to Ernesta.

"Shall I read this as I read the other?" he asked. She nodded, and he read:

"Louis Strange died this morning."



L'ENVOI

LONG since I wrung my heart out for your sake
Of all emotions, from the merest ache
To keenest pleasure. Shall you frown to-day
Because it holds no more for you to take?

No thing was there by you left unpossessed—
You held the worst of worst, the best of best;
What man may give when all is given? Nay,
Of all poor things my heart is emptiest.

JOHN WINWOOD.



ALAS, TOO TRUE!

LITTLE WILLIE—Papa, who is the best man at a wedding?

MR. HENNYPECK—The best man is the chap who sees the other fellow get the worst of it, my son.



THE FLIRT

THE flirt flaunts all her charms, we see,
At every man she meets;
The flower allures the business bee—
Who stings her for her sweets.

D. D.



COULDN'T FOOL HIM AGAIN

THE POET—This is my last poem, sir.

EDITOR (*shaking his head*)—That's what you told me when I accepted your other one.

LA FIN D'UNE VIE

Par Henri Dumay

C'ÉTAIT au printemps, à l'heure indécise et charmante où la clarté de l'aube commence à peine à se laisser soupçonner sur les choses. Le comte Pierre de Valneuse sortit du club et enfila les rues désertes, au hasard.

Son pas sonnait clair sur les trottoirs, dans la paix de l'heure matinale. Il faisait frais. Énervé, démolé par sa nuit blanche, il eut froid; tout en marchant il ferma son pardessus sur le plastron ouvert de l'habit noir, releva aussi son collet.

Puis avec un coup de canne rageur à l'asphalte, il constata tout haut: "Cette fois, il n'y a pas à dire, c'est fini!"

Cela signifiait qu'il était ruiné—complètement; plus que cela même: non seulement plus le sou, mais des dettes énormes, et d'autres, de tous côtés, petites criardes, exaspérantes.

Ah, les cartes! Après une dernière et irréparable partie, longue suite de désastres, au lieu de se refaire un peu, il venait encore de perdre sur parole cent trente mille francs.

Il fit quelques pas dans la grande allée des Champs Élysées, le long des chaises inoccupées de la promenade.

Pas l'ombre d'un espoir de se relever! Ses dernières terres, là-bas, dans la province, vendues. Le château où il était né, parti comme le reste. Son hôtel à Paris pourri d'hypothèques.

Et toutes ces dettes: billets souscrits à des usuriers, sommes soutirées à des amis qui ignoraient la proximité fatale de son écroulement, factures hurlantes des tailleur, bottiers, chemisiers; jusqu'aux quelques louis empruntés, l'air négligent et supérieur,

à ses domestiques: "Jules, faites-moi penser de vous rendre cela, n'est-ce pas?"

Ah! fichtre oui, c'était bien la fin!

À un banc il s'assit, et laissant une cigarette griller lentement à ses lèvres il songea encore:

"Avant vingt-quatre heures, la dette d'honneur, la dette de jeu non payée; mon nom collé à la glace; l'infamie!"

Il eut un serrement de gorge à mesurer ainsi sa position. Jusqu'à cette heure il n'avait jamais cru possible qu'il pût en arriver là.

"Rien à faire, rien! Allons, je vais m'exécuter. Au moins, maintenant, c'est la fin finale de tous mes embûchements; à vrai dire, il y a un bon moment que j'en avais assez!"

Et, enfoncée dans sa poche, sa main alla retrouver un bijou de revolver dont il s'était muni le soir d'avant pour ne pas être pris au dépourvu si la partie encore une fois tournait mal.

Mourir, il fallait mourir tout de suite, avant qu'il fit grand jour. Où ferait-il le coup? Il se remit à marcher, et son esprit débattit la question; vaguement, car il songeait aussi à toutes sortes d'autres choses. Margot, par exemple, une grande fille de chair superbe et jeune qui s'était amourachée de lui un soir, il y avait un an, et qui depuis était fidèle à ce caprice. La veille elle lui avait téléphoné de venir la chercher, vers minuit, au petit théâtre où elle jouait. Ne le voyant pas elle s'était, sans doute, faite conduire chez lui comme elle faisait souvent, car elle savait son vice et qu'un joueur oublie ou néglige les rendezvous.

Maintenant la belle fille devait

dormir là-bas, étalée, impudique comme un Rubens, avec ses blonds cheveux épars. Quel réveil lorsqu'on le rapporterait, lui, la mâchoire cassée et saignante, au milieu des jupons coquets, des longs bas, des petits souliers, de toute son intimité dont elle avait, sans doute, comme d'habitude semé le désordre par la chambre.

Puis il se demanda quel effet produirait sa mort sur les autres, dans son monde frivole et cynique des clubs, des salons, et des bars. Le plaindrait-on? Ah bien, oui! Pas plus que tant d'autres qui comme lui . . . Ainsi le petit marquis de Savenay, si gentil, si cajolé, si bon garçon. Un mois avant il s'était fait sauter la tête, Savenay, à Monte Carlo; on avait raconté assez de saletées sur son compte, tout en le plaignant avec ces phrases banales dont est faite la conversation des mondains! Maintenant il ne manquait guère à personne le petit marquis, on n'y pensait même plus.

Pour lui, Pierre de Valneuse, le bel homme spirituel, élégant, qu'on avait tant recherché, ce serait tout pareil. Les femmes même—tant de femmes dont il avait servi les élans de romance, ces rages d'amour qu'elles ont toutes ou qu'en toutes on peut du moins faire naître—les femmes aussi l'oublieraien!

Il pensa à quelques unes séparément, et essaya de se figurer comment allait les affecter sa mort.

Mais rencontrant tout à coup deux agents de police, il eut une secousse intérieure comme si ces représentants de la loi eussent pu savoir qu'il allait se tuer et surgissaient de parmi les arbres pour l'en empêcher.

Son idée ramenée au sujet de son suicide, retourna encore la question de l'endroit.

“Je ne peux pas cependant me tuer ici, au milieu de la chaussée; on croirait que j'ai fait le coup dans un accès de fièvre chaude. Je vais remonter à pied jusqu'au Bois de Boulogne. Et là, dans une jolie petite allée bien verte, le comte Pierre de Valneuse, qui, en quatorze ans, a bêtement gaspillé la rondelette

somme de quatre millions et demi, sans compter les dettes, se cassera la tête, le 12 mai 1900, vers les 5 heures du matin. . . .

“Il était écrit que je mourrais sans avoir vu la fin du siècle. . . .”

Sa résolution irrévocablement prise, et ayant mis un petit ton de bravade intime dans la formulation du programme, Pierre de Valneuse éprouva un soulagement, une satisfaction de quelque chose accomplie. Il marchait maintenant d'un pas plus dégagé. Une senteur embaumée lui arriva des arbres en fleurs. Sans être une nature particulièrement poétique, il jouit avec une certaine ardeur de la dernière bonne chose que lui offrait l'existence, la sérénité d'une belle fin d'night, les mystères délicieux d'une aurore.

Il avait dépassé le rond point des Champs Elysées, et continuait à remonter vers l'Arc de Triomphe. Mais deux voitures passèrent sur la chaussée, chargées de messieurs et de soupeuses qui sortaient de quelque restaurant de nuit. C'étaient des visiteurs de sa connaissance qui le reconnaissent et hélèrent une invitation à venir boire du lait au Pré-Catelan.

Il refusa; et, tournant à droite, s'enfuit par des rues, sans savoir où. Un quart d'heure après, il gravissait la rue de Rome absolument déserte. Toutes les boutiques étaient fermées, sauf un petit débit de liqueurs où l'on n'avait pas encore complètement enlevé les volets. Deux ou trois employés du chemin de fer buvaient là, à la lumière du gaz qui, du dehors où il faisait déjà assez clair, semblait bizarre.

Il était loin de sa route. Décidément il n'irait pas au Bois; après tout, quand il s'agit de se mettre une balle dans le corps, les Ternes ou les Batignolles valent tout autre quartier. Il se dit:

“Il doit y avoir des squares par là-haut. Dans le prochain square ça ira très bien.”

**

L'idée de la fin prochaine ne donnait à Valneuse aucune angoisse;

à un détour de sa songerie il s'en étonna un peu, et avec un petit plaisir de vanité se reconnut très crâne.

* *

Il finit par arriver dans des faubourgs à lui inconnus et qu'il jugea excentriques. De loin il aperçut un rassemblement de cinq ou six hommes et de deux jeunes femmes, tous déguenillés, puant la paresse et le vice. Ces gens étaient en train de se concerter debout dans une encoignure. À son approche les faces patibulaires se tournèrent vers lui, et le regardèrent venir sans plus parler.

Le comte passa, exprès, tout à côté d'eux, et les dévisagea insolemment. Comme il aurait voulu être attaqué! Il sentit que c'eût été une satisfaction de défendre, le revolver au poing, cette vie dont il ne voulait plus. Mais, sitôt qu'il eut passé, les drôles à mauvaise mine ne firent aucunement attention à lui et s'éloignèrent.

Un peu après il vit venir sur le même trottoir un être baroque, comme une grosse boule irrégulière qui aurait des pieds et marcherait. Ce monstre était une toute petite bossue, très agée, en loques, chargée d'une hotte de chiffonnière, ce qui lui faisait une seconde bosse. En passant, la vieille leva péniblement une face repoussante de misère sur le beau monsieur en pardessus clair et chapeau haut de forme.

Une sourire mélancolique plissa les lèvres de Pierre, et un regret lui vint plus réel qu'il ne voulait l'admettre. Pourquoi n'avoir pas rencontré ce fétiche quelques heures plus tôt? Qui sait? Il n'aurait peut-être pas perdu si, avant d'aller au jeu, il avait touché la bosse.

Rue Legendre, ses regards s'arrêtèrent sur une jeune femme qui déjà vendait du café au lait et du chocolat sous la voûte d'une porte. Deux maçons en vestes maculées de blanc lampèrent leurs bols, payèrent et partirent. La marchande, dans la pâleur claire et rosée de l'aurore, faisait plaisir à voir, très saine de

teint, vigoureuse et calme, portant un tablier blanc très propre.

"Madame, veuillez me donner une tasse de lait froid, sans sucre."

Pierre s'était soudain aperçut qu'il avait la gorge en feu, la bouche pâteuse.

"Voilà, monsieur. . . . On vient de l'apporter de la campagne."

L'homme du grand monde but avec plaisir, pas le moins du monde dégouté, ce qu'il n'aurait certes pas pu faire quelques heures auparavant.

* *

Peu à peu la blancheur pleine du jour était venue. Quand sonnèrent cinq heures, bien qu'on sentît encore qu'il était très matin, il n'y avait plus trace d'hésitation dans la lumière.

Le comte remontait une grande artère d'un quartier populaire.

Sur la chaussée du milieu, venant de la campagne à destination des marchés, trottaient, hautes sur roues, les voitures des maraîchers, pleines de jardinage et de fruits. Sur les trottoirs passait déjà beaucoup de monde. C'était surtout des ouvriers marchant vers leur travail.

Ils s'en allaient en grand nombre à pas méthodiques; les uns redescendaient vers Paris, les autres au contraire remontaient vers les chantiers et les fabriques de banlieue. Il y avait des maçons en blouses blanches et plâtres, des mécaniciens en bougerons bleus, et des gens en anciennes vestes de dimanches, salies, mal boutonnées, moins familières à ces gens que les vêtements d'usine qu'ils endosseraient tout à l'heure.

Beaucoup s'en allaient les bras balants; d'autres portaient dans des paniers, ou roulée dans des journaux, la pitance du milieu du jour.

Il y en avait de gais qui s'apostrophaient de plaisanteries d'un groupe à l'autre. Mais la plupart encore mal eveillés filaient droit devant eux, sans rien voir, sans rien dire, sans fumer.

Tous donnaient l'impression grave, un peu triste, de gens sérieux et résignés, de citoyens qui voient dans la vie autre chose qu'une rigolade, et qui ont accepté leurs devoirs.

L'ensemble avait sa grandeur et fit faire au comte de Valneuse un retour sur lui-même. Un petit café ouvrait ses portes; un garçon en charriaient les tables et les chaises remisées à l'intérieur pour la nuit, et les installaient sur le trottoir. Pierre s'assit là, et commanda quelque chose à boire comme prétexte à voir passer le peuple, le peuple qui peine et produit. Il se mit à songer d'une façon toute nouvelle.

Il n'avait jamais rien fait de ses dix doigts, lui. Sorti d'une famille noble, jusqu'à dix-huit ans il avait été choyé entre les jupes de sa mère et de sa grand'mère, entouré de servantes et de valets. Vers sa majorité la mort de tous les siens l'avait fait maître absolu de plusieurs grosses fortunes. Et son argent avait continué autour de lui l'obséquiosité de tous.

Toujours donc il s'était considéré, avec les gens de son cercle et de son monde, d'une essence supérieure au reste de l'humanité. Jusqu'alors il n'avait jamais regardé le peuple. Sur la foi de certains titrés, et d'après des choses lues distraitemment dans des journaux pour aristocrates, il s'était fait des masses qui travaillent une idée peu favorable.

Mais voilà que soudain une curiosité le prenait. Voilà qu'il considérait avec respect les producteurs des richesses de la vie.

Il réfléchit longuement, ruminait jusqu'à l'amertume la stupidité vide de son existence de jouisseur et d'inutile. Enfin il se leva, viril et résolu. Finie la fête, par force; mais abandonnée aussi la lâche idée de se tuer plutôt que d'accepter la contrainte commune. Il allait gagner sa vie.

Il redescendit vers Paris, le cœur et la démarche allègres. Si à ce moment on lui avait annoncé un nouvel héritage, c'est à dire les moyens de continuer son luxe et son oisiveté, il eût refusé net, sans hésitation.

*
* *

Quelque part sur son chemin il trouva un magasin où l'on vendait des vêtements de travailleur. Il se munit là-dedans d'un pantalon de

velours brun à côtes et d'un paletot de toile bleue. Il acheta aussi une casquette. Le tout se montait à une quinzaine de francs qu'il paya avec son dernier louis, le louis emprunté au valet de pied qui, au cercle, lui avait passé son pardessus. Puis, son paquet sous le bras, le comte de Valneuse se mit en route pour son appartement où il voulait changer de costume.

Il arriva au somptueux entresol avant huit heures. Son domestique l'attendait, toujours en ronflant sur un sofa du vestibule.

"Julien, vous pouvez aller vous coucher, je n'aurai pas besoin de vous."

"Madame est là," prévint le larin, "elle est venue vers minuit; elle prétend que monsieur lui avait promis de venir la chercher au théâtre; alors. . . ."

Le comte coupa court: "C'est bien; allez."

Puis il pénétra dans sa chambre.

Dans la demi-clarté qui filtrait à travers les rideaux soigneusement joints, Margot dormait encore et ne se réveilla point. Valneuse s'approcha du lit et considéra la blonde créature paresseuse et soignée; ses yeux d'amateur délicat parcoururent longuement et avec plaisir les membres voluptueux; sa main caressa la soyeuse chevelure d'or étalée sur l'oreiller.

Sous la caresse Margot ouvrit des yeux languides, et, avec un sourire endormi qui la fit adorable, elle mit ses deux beaux bras nus autour du cou de l'homme qu'elle attira vers elle pour des baisers.

Pierre de Valneuse s'abandonnait, entrevoyait déjà une de ces longues journées de paresse et de plaisir dont il avait coutume. Mais tout à coup la vision de millions de travailleurs qui, à cette heure même du jour piochaient, limaient, bûchaient partout, en des milliers d'usines et de chantiers, le redressa dans une nouvelle résolution.

Margot s'étonna des paroles qu'il dit. Comme elle l'aimait réellement, elle éprouva de la peine de tant de froideur, et se répandit en reproches mouillés de larmes.

Le comte, pour le plaisir de confier à quelqu'un son nouveau plan de vie qu'il jugeait surprenant et original, faillit se laisser aller à dire ses nouvelles idées. Mais sachant l'irrémissible stupidité de cette femme, il eut la prévision des choses idiotes qu'il lui faudrait entendre, et se tut.

Il fit lever et habiller sa maîtresse, et l'expédia au plus vite par le prétexte d'une respectable visite attendue. Puis il revêtit sa défroque de prolétaire, coiffa sa casquette et après une heure ou deux passées à brûler des papiers intimes, il sortit sans rien dire à ses domestiques, sans prendre un souvenir, sans écrire une lettre d'adieu à un ami.

* *

Quand il eut tourné au coin de la rue, le comte Pierre de Valneuse fut aussi mort que s'il s'était vraiment cassé la tête au revolver. Il ne resta plus que Pierre Valneuse tout court—un gaillard solide et de bonne tourture sous ses habits grossiers.

Il s'en fut par les rues, au hasard, pendant des heures, sifflotant des flonflons, se sentant la peau neuve et le cœur léger. En un quartier lointain, devant un bâtiment en construction, il se proposa à l'entrepreneur pour décharger des madriers qu'on amenait par grandes voitures. On l'embaucha avec deux ou trois autres. Ce travail dura jusqu'à la tombée du jour.

Après la longue satisfaction de sentir ses muscles d'athlète jouer enfin dans une besogne utile, il eut l'orgueil d'étendre la main pour recevoir son dû, de voir dans sa palme endolorie trois pièces d'argent, trois francs qu'il avait gagnés.

Il mangea de bon cœur l'épaisse soupe et le mouton aux pommes de terre d'une gargote de faubourg. Puis il loua une chambre d'ouvrier chez une brave femme à qui il rappelait un fils mort soldat en Afrique, et qui dès l'abord le combla d'attentions.

Le lendemain, mis debout dès l'aube par la dégringolade d'autres travailleurs dans les escaliers, il s'en fut quérir "l'embauche." Sur sa

mine ouverte et son allure râblée, un constructeur mécanicien l'accepta tout de suite comme homme de peine. Trois mois après, son intelligence et sa bonne volonté l'avaient promu chauffeur et il gagnait six francs par jour.

* *

Un soir, après la dure journée faite, la nostalgie des endroits fréquentés jadis le prit, et des hauteurs populaires de Ménilmontant il descendit se promener un peu, en badaud, dans le flamboiement des grands boulevards.

Il croisa beaucoup de ses anciens amis, qui ne le reconnurent pas. Même, à la porte d'un restaurant à la mode, il vit Margot descendre de voiture. La jeune femme, somptueuse, les épaules chargées de fourrures, escortée d'un banquier étique mais très riche et très chic, frôla l'ouvrier, le regarda dédaigneusement, et ne soupçonna pas un instant l'amant qu'à tous les autres elle avait préféré.

Pierre Valneuse ouvrier, remonta à son faubourg sans un regret, l'esprit et la chair pleins d'une saine fierté.

* *

Il y a plus d'un an que s'est passé tout cela. Hier, appuyé à la lice, parmi les passagers de troisième classe qu'emportaient *La Bretagne* vers New York et la vaste Amérique, Pierre Valneuse, sérieux, regardait disparaître les dernières traces de la France—au loin, dans la brume de mer.

Il se sentait le cœur de plus en plus serré de tristesse et, en regardant les flots qui bruissaient rapides le long du flanc du navire, il rêva longtemps au passé doré.

Mais par un effort il secoua enfin les visions malsaines et tourna sa pensée vers le futur inconnu où l'ambition le poussait, où il se mit à entasser les espoirs. Il partait parce qu'en France un travailleur gagne par trop peu.

Pierre Valneuse tout court avait songé un jour qu'il lui serait doux de payer les dettes énormes, les dettes multiples laissées par le comte Pierre de Valneuse, l'aristocratique "propre à rien" qu'il avait été.

A NEW REPUBLIC

A NEW federation has lately been formed—
 It boasts of a government free;
 Two hearts by the tenderest passions were warmed,
 Which brought forth a union, you see!
 “For weal or for woe, through storm and through strife”—
 Was e'er nation's motto like this?—
 The compact each signed for the length of a life
 And affixed the Great Seal—'twas a kiss!

The government, framed to each purpose intent,
 Acknowledges plainly that it
 Derives its just powers from willing consent
 Of the governed, and errs not a whit;
 Since clearly in weakness its greatest strength lies,
 A soft word's diplomacy rare
 Will dry up the tears in a pair of blue eyes
 And conquer rebellion that's there.

The new federation is quite a success,
 The government gives us report;
 Though much now depends, it is free to confess,
 In its keeping aloof from a court
 Where right of secession the judge styles “divorce”—
 For such things have nothing to do
 With clinging, and billing, and cooing, of course,
 Where Love rules a nation of two.

ROY FARRELL GREENE.



CHIEFLY ORNAMENTAL

DE JONES—Is there a clock in your church?
 SLEEPLEIGH—Yes, but it isn't of much use; it hasn't any alarm.



A LOGICAL CONCLUSION

THEY who would keep their hands soft, sleep
 With gloves on when they're in their beds;
 Some men you meet, you'd think, must keep
 In sleep their hats upon their heads.

DOROTHY DORR.

A LANE IN LENOX

By Kate Masterson

GOLDEN-ROD on either side waving its flame-stalks over a glorious tangle of wild flowers. Blue-fringed daisies with yellow eyes bend over the feathery grasses, and upon the stone wall a vine clammers, ruddy-scarlet, brown-purple and green-and-gold.

Through the trees comes the cool patterning of a little river over the stones. Sometimes a bird chirps softly. A man and a girl ride slowly up the road, their horses' feet echoing loudly over occasional bridges. It is early morning. The girl speaks:

“It seems to me I’ve ridden this way before.”

“But you told me last night this was your first visit.”

“Yes-s.”

“Country roads are so very much alike.”

“Not roads like this.”

There is a silence. A squirrel scampers across the road. She starts slightly. He says:

“It will be a revelation to you. The beauty of the place at this time of year is almost unearthly. There are vistas breaking out at turns as we go up this hill that are fairly panoramic. Lenox is heaven!”

The girl draws a deep breath, and says:

“I am so glad I came up for the party!”

“And so am I!”

“That you came?”

“Both!”

The girl laughs merrily, with a swift, sidelong glance at him from under her lashes. The brook and bird duet grows louder, sweeter, then still again.

“You see, if we hadn’t come up for the party we never should have met!”

“That would have been dreadful.”

She laughs again.

“Do you know, you hold your rein more oddly than any girl I know?”

“The Indians ride that way, they say.”

“Eh? Really? That’s funny!”

“My riding teacher could never break me of the habit.”

“You look a bit like an Indian girl—in a picture; but no—not with that golden hair of yours. But why should you ride like an Indian?”

“Sometimes I dream. And always I am an Indian girl, and there is a war. And I sit in a great tent. My father is a chief. And the young men bring furs and fish and flowers to me. Just fancy!”

“Ah! A titled lady?”

“Yes—and you know—when one has dreams like that—real life seems tame—and real men— Oh!”

“Not up to the mark, eh?”

“Why, there is one young chief in my dream—oh, you should see him!—handsome—excelling in every sport—using his arrow so skilfully that he is named ‘Sure Heart!’—that’s what it is in English. You wouldn’t understand it if I told you in Indian.”

“Wouldn’t I?”

“No; but it means that his arrow never failed to kill. Now, when a girl meets a man like that in dream-land, dress-coats seem horrid.”

“H’m!”

“Well, in my dream one night we rode, he and I, through this lane. No—no! Don’t tell me! I tell you I see the same rocks, the flowers, the

mountains now and then through the trees over there—I heard the brook and the rollicking song of that bird—why, even the squirrel that ran across the road—did you see it? Don't laugh at me!"

"A very pretty dream!"

"Isn't it? Do you ever think that we may live another life when we are asleep?"

"When we are asleep? I can hardly think—tell me, is it possible that I have forgotten—have we ever met before?"

"Last night! See—reach up and get me that branch of red ivy hanging over your head. Well done! That ivy grew in my dream, too. Now, what will you do with it?"

"Wreathe it like this over your horse's neck—"

"Don't!"

"Why not?"

"He did that. I am frightened. Let us turn back!"

"Never!"

"Who are you?"

"You know my name."

"But tell me something more."

"Look here, you've been having fun with me right along."

"How?"

"Your dream and all."

"What do you mean?"

"Don't you really know who I am?"

"Marquette, the football man, champion of—"

"The Indian football man—"

"Now playing with Yale?"

"That's me. I'm a real Indian. Not like the chap in the dream—am I?"

"Oh! There's the bridge!"

There is another silence. The horses' hoofs make a rhythmic music. She urges her mount to a gallop. Her sailor hat falls back on her tumbled golden hair. He calls to her warningly. She looks back with a laugh. He reaches her side and says:

"Why did you do that?"

"What?—gallop over the bridge?"

"Yes."

"Don't you know?"

"No."

"I thought you were going to kiss me."

"Oh, I say! Ha! ha!"

"He did."

"I don't kiss girls suddenly like that. Besides, it frightens the horses. You forget I am quite civilized."

"My horse is very gentle. He's accustomed to things. Did you see how he took that squirrel?"

"H'm-mmm. Pull up a minute. I want to show you something. Promise not to scream."

"I never scream."

He pulls off his left glove, pushes up the coat sleeve and turns over the linen cuff beneath. On his arm there is a curiously tattooed mark. The girl bends over to see it.

"How very odd!"

"Do you see what it is?"

"A heart with an arrow through its centre. Why—when did you have it done?"

"It's been there since I was a baby. It means my name—my Indian name—that is what surprised me when you said—you see nobody knows but—"

"Listen—isn't this true? The next turn of the road we come to a ledge of rock—above the river?"

"That's true! You've been here before. How could you know? That rock is called 'The Lovers' Leap.'"

"Why do so many lovers leap, I wonder?"

"They don't, nowadays. They marry."

"That's quite as effective an ending."

"Of life?"

"Of love."

"It shouldn't be."

They reach the top of the hill and pause to look across at the misty blue of the mountain-top showing against the reddening sky. Beneath the great projecting rock a miniature torrent dashes. He dismounts and lifts her from her saddle. They peer over the edge, hand in hand, like children. With his gloved hands he brushes off an old metal plate set in the rock at their feet. On it she reads the legend:

FROM THIS ROCK AN INDIAN PRINCESS
OF THE PEQUOT TRIBE
LEAPED WITH HER LOVER IN 1650.

The girl shivers slightly.
"It is cold here. Let us go back—
to—earth."

*He takes both her hands in his and
looks into her eyes, while she flushes
softly.*

"No; let us go back—to Lenox.
Poor things, they never came back!"

"Perhaps—they did. Who knows?"
He had grown very white. Suddenly she turned and hid her face in her hands.

"Don't!" he pleaded. "Please
don't!"

*He gently drew her fingers from
her face and looked into her eyes.
There was a twinkle of mischief and
amusement there.*

"Huh!" he said, stiffly, "I knew
you were joking all the time!"



A MASQUE OF LOVE

I KNOW you love me not, strange child of passion!
Yet I have heard low words and scented sighs
Break breathless at your lips—have watched your eyes
Deepen and droop and melt in maddening fashion
Before the hunger of my glad surmise!

Your soft, uncertain murmurings but hide
The mirthful mockery of an untouched heart.
When on my lips your clinging kisses smart,
'Tis Pleasure's Self you love; and how, beside
That futile, phantom god, can man hold part?

Oh, haunting dream of living loveliness,
Oh, royal rebel to the rules of love,
Love not at all, or love all else above!
And yet—ah, though you loved me even less,
Still—still must I my honest passion prove!

R. W. ST. HILL.



MEN ARE BUT CHILDREN

MOTHER—What is all this fuss in the nursery about?
SMALL BROTHER (*crying*)—James is always the procession, and I'm
tired of being the crowd on the sidewalk.

WORDS AND FLOWERS

IF words could turn to flowers
 From sunny garden plots,
 Then would I cheer your hours
 With fair forget-me-nots.

If words could grow like flowers,
 And shed their perfumes sweet,
 Then would I throw in showers
 Fresh roses at your feet.

If words could soothe like flowers,
 And bourgeon as they please,
 I'd build for you fair bowers
 Of pansies and heartsease.

If words could woo like flowers,
 Undimmed with doubt or fear,
 Blessed by the vernal powers,
 Then I would win you, dear!

WILLIAM HAMILTON HAYNE.



AT A FIFTH AVENUE GALLERY

“THIS picture is said to be a Rubens. Fifty thousand dollars have just been paid for it.”
 “The party who bought it must have been a Rube.”



THE RESULT OF PRACTICE

“I UNDERSTAND she is making great progress at golf.”
 “Remarkable! She can now break a brassie and lose a ball at one stroke!”



HE KNEW BETTER

MOLLIE—You have nothing to look forward to.
 CHOLLIE—Yes, I have. I have a wealthy aunt who believes in Christian Science.

THINGS AZURE AND ARGENT

By Michael Gifford White

THE United States College of Heraldry gazed pensively out of a rear window of No. 52½ South Washington Square. A bright Spring sun drew moisture from the lines of many-colored garments strung, mesh-like, from wall to wall, and fell with inspiriting warmth on the crouching forms of two members of the feline race, tuning their melodious voices for the nocturnal Spring concerts, soon to be opened.

However, these cheerful evidences of returning Summer did not strike a sympathetic chord in the soul of the United States College of Heraldry, represented in all its offices by one Arthur Wakefield, a young man of up-to-date exterior, in spite of a mental tendency toward historical and antiquarian research.

It was this tendency that had caused Wakefield, much to the chagrin of his friends, to relinquish a good position in Buffalo for the purpose of establishing in New York what he believed to be a much-needed institution, the said United States College of Heraldry; and, for certain reasons, to select South Washington Square as the most desirable locality in which to initiate a connection.

As is well known, the north side of the Square has long been the chosen abode of aristocracy and wealth, just as the south side has become that of art, and consequent impecuniosity—the deduction being obvious that an inexpensive lodgment could be obtained actually *vis-à-vis* with those who might naturally be presumed to be interested in the science of heraldry. Further, the Astor Library, upon whose shelves repose many volumes

dealing with lineage and the proper grouping of griffins, unicorns and other strange monsters into coats-of-arms, was but a few blocks distant—an added inducement in the saving of car fares.

Whether, however, the residents of North Washington Square were just a little too aristocratic, and had already been provided with all that was necessary in the way of chevrons, gules and bars proper; whether the bars sinister had been already satisfactorily explained away, and everyone residing in that fortunate neighborhood could trace an unbroken descent, either to the *Mayflower* or to the worthy burghers of Holland, is not known; but certain it is that they did not patronize the United States College of Heraldry on the opposite side of the Square to the extent of making the institution a financial success.

With the exception, in fact, of a few minor commissions to provide some rampant beast or fowl for a crest, only one important order for a complete genealogy and et ceteras had been received during a period of six months; and that was from an unknown person in his native city, whose account appeared destined to stand on the wrong side of the ledger.

This condition of affairs naturally weighed heavily on Wakefield's mind, to which the last few days had added another anxiety by the advent to New York of a certain family from Buffalo, in one member of which he had for some time taken a deep interest.

The visit just at that particular time could not have been more inopportune. Reasonably, the visitors

expected to be taken to various places of public entertainment—a course which, however much Wakefield might have been anxious to pursue it, the low state of the treasury of the United States College of Heraldry absolutely prohibited.

On three mornings in succession he had taken Maud and her mother for a ramble in Central Park, and had learnedly discoursed on the significance of the various beasts in the zoölogical enclosure with regard to the science of heraldry; but on the last occasion he could not deny to himself that his friends looked bored, and with difficulty suppressed the fact that they yearned for other opportunities of recreation.

They had even gone so far as to hint broadly how much they would like to visit his studio in South Washington Square, and how delightful it must be to dine at one of those bohemian resorts where artists and all that queer kind of people congregate and say and do the eccentric things proverbial to their calling.

Strenuously Wakefield had endeavored to assure his friends that the region of South Washington Square was no longer an interesting part of the city, that such artists as dwelt there were prosaic fellows, too much engaged in pursuit of the elusive dollar to affect any appearance of bohemianism, and that as to the delightful little dinners at the French cafés, it was far better to dine at their hotel, where reliance could be placed on the culinary department.

Still, he had gauged the feminine mind too well to believe that it would relinquish a project once engendered therein, and he awaited with trepidation the announcement of a proposed visit and the difficulty he would experience in gathering together the funds necessary to do honor to the occasion.

Such was the combination of untoward circumstances that shadowed the bright influences of that Spring morning, when a sharp knock on the door interrupted his disquieting reflections.

"Come!" he cried, turning half round. "Come in."

In response the door was slowly opened, and a stout woman, short of breath, with her hair secured beneath a red cotton handkerchief tied under the chin, and holding a feather duster in one hand, wheezed into the room.

"Ah! good morning, Mrs. Jenks," greeted Wakefield. "It's a fine morning, isn't it?"

"Yes," curtly replied the stout woman. "It is a fine morning, Mr. Wakefield. The mail carrier just left this letter, so I thought I'd bring it up, as probably you'd want to see me anyway."

"Want to see you?" repeated Wakefield, in a tone of affected surprise. He knew full well that it was his landlady's way of intimating that the rent was overdue.

"Yes, sir. It's the fifteenth of the month, you understand, with a month's rent owing besides."

"Dear me, you don't say so!" exclaimed the United States College of Heraldry in accents of astonishment. "How careless of me to have forgotten! I have such a terrible memory, Mrs. Jenks. My friends declare I'm the most absent-minded creature alive. But I shall go down to the bank this afternoon, and then we'll settle up everything." He had more than once found this a good plan to stave off the importunities of pressing creditors.

"And there's three months' coffee and rolls not paid for," added Mrs. Jenks, significantly.

"Three months' coffee and rolls!" repeated Wakefield, as if he had just been informed of the death of a near relative leaving an immense fortune to charities; "surely it cannot be three months' coffee and rolls!"

"Yes, it is, sir," replied Mrs. Jenks, tersely.

"Oh! that's too bad. I'll make a note of it when I go down to the bank this afternoon. But please put it all down on one bill, Mrs. Jenks, because that simplifies matters, and I don't like to wrack my memory over trifles."

"Well, but that ain't the money," remarked Mrs. Jenks, as she demolished the newly completed residence of a spider by a sweep of her feather duster. "I have to pay—"

"To be sure, certainly," interposed Wakefield. "But you shall have the money all right. As I said before, I'll go down to the bank this afternoon where I—where, that is to say, there is a great deal of money on deposit, and I'll draw a check, and then we'll settle up everything. I'm very busy just now. Good-morning, Mrs. Jenks," and Wakefield nodded and smiled reassuringly as Mrs. Jenks sighed deeply and made a heavy exit.

"I wonder who the letter's from?" he reflected, as he took up the missive. "Perhaps a check from my Buffalo client at last." Then, as he glanced at the handwriting, the shade of gravity again overspread his face. "It's from Maud. What does she want, I wonder?"

The letter was brief and to the point. It was to the effect that the writer and her mother were tired of being cooped up in the hotel, and that by way of diversion they begged to be taken out to some nice place to dine that evening.

Wakefield smiled grimly, as he placed the letter on a table and ejaculated: "Take them out to some nice place to dinner!" Then he plunged his hand into a pocket and drew forth a collection of small change, which he reckoned with care.

"One fifty-cent piece, three quarters, a Canadian dime—why don't the Canucks keep their bad money at home?—six nickels and eleven pennies. Total, one dollar and seventy-six cents. Well, at the Chien d'Or, three dinners at fifty cents—one dollar and fifty, fifteen cents for the waiter—you can forget your landlady, the grocer, or your best friend, but never the waiter—one dollar and sixty-five. That leaves me with the Canadian dime and a penny for a newspaper, and then there's the car fares."

He searched his pockets and discovered another quarter. "Thank

heaven!" he exclaimed, "though if they say they'll take oysters, there's nothing left for me to do but make an assignment. It all comes," he concluded, "of pretending that one is doing a splendid business, when as a matter of fact even personal securities are hypothecated. Upon my word, it is too bad, because Maud will think me the meanest fellow in existence, and I would not for the world appear as such in her mirthful blue eyes. I must write at once to that lady client and request an immediate settlement of my account."

During the day Wakefield spent a considerable part of his time in reducing the chaotic state of the studio of the United States College of Heraldry to something approaching order, and he wrote a peremptory note to the lady in Buffalo, requesting a prompt attention to his claim—in payment for the postage of which communication he was able to congratulate himself on exchanging the Canadian dime for a two-cent stamp and eight good American coppers in addition. Then, with the resignation of a philosopher, he awaited the events of the evening.

Punctual to the hour stated in the letter, Wakefield presented himself at the Hotel Patrician, and conducted his friends to the Cabaret du Chien d'Or, where, to his profound relief, both Maud and her mother declined the proffer of oysters.

Further, they expressed themselves so delighted with the place that, in order to keep up the spirit of the entertainment, he pointed out a group of young men rapidly undermining their constitutions by smoking cigarettes between each course, as rising artists; and an elderly gentleman of mercantile appearance, who had ordered *vin supérieur* at the extravagant outlay of an extra ten cents, as the editor of a leading magazine. Two young women, who might have been country school teachers under the chaperonage of a male city cousin, and who sipped their ordinary claret with the doubtful air of persons not quite sure as to whether or not they were overstepping the bounds of excusable

wickedness, he indicated as probable members of the theatrical profession.

The dinner over, a short walk brought them to 52½ South Washington Square, where, on opening the door to invite his friends to enter, Wakefield found himself unexpectedly confronted by Mrs. Jenks.

"Good-evening, Mrs. Jenks," he blandly greeted his landlady.

"Do you want to see me, Mr. Wakefield, before I go out?" she demanded, pertinently.

"Well—er, not before you go out, Mrs. Jenks. To-morrow morning, if you have a few moments to spare. Then I shall be very glad to see you."

"Very well, Mr. Wakefield. I've put your bill for the two months' rent and the three months' coffee and rolls owing under your door," she blurted out, with cruel indifference to the presence of her tenant's visitors.

"Mrs. Jenks, my landlady, is a little abrupt in her manner," remarked Wakefield, as he ushered his friends into the apartment devoted to the uses of the United States College of Heraldry, "but I make excuses for her, because she has a hard life, poor woman, and keeps everything in such perfect order."

In response, Maud gave vent to the faintest ripple of laughter. That he had always admired Maud when she laughed was true, for her eyes sparkled coquettishly, and the prettiest dimples indented her cheeks; but somehow he felt that the occasion was one that did not possess any of the elements of humor.

Placing two of the most comfortable chairs for his guests, while he begged them to accept the freedom of his workshop, he lit a cigar and perched himself on the only table boasted by the establishment.

"I suppose you just work here during the day, and live at a hotel," remarked Maud, surveying the somewhat meagre furniture of the room.

Wakefield laughed lightly. "This is my den, my cave," he replied. "When the chronicles of South Wash-

ington Square are written, a chapter will surely be devoted to the cave-dwellers of the region."

"How interesting!" replied Maud, and then, scrutinizing a photograph on the wall near by: "Isn't that a scene in Buffalo?"

"Buffalo, yes," he answered. "By the way, though, do you happen to know a Miss Jackson, of Lincoln avenue?"

"In Buffalo?"

"Yes, in Buffalo."

"Gertrude Jackson?" she asked, interestedly.

"Yes; Miss Gertrude Jackson."

"Why, she is a great friend of mine."

"A great friend of yours! I never heard you mention her before."

"Oh, yes. We were college chums, you know."

"Well, I'm glad you informed me on the point, because I might have been tempted to say more than that I have a very poor opinion of her."

"You have?"

"Because I think your friend Gertrude Jackson has an extremely unretentive memory."

"Has she? I never noticed that trait in her character."

"Ah! Probably you never had any business relations with her. Do you know, she has put me to no end of trouble hunting up her genealogy and making up a coat-of-arms, but never dreams of sending a check in payment."

"Oh, you don't mean to say it was you to whom Gertrude wrote about her pedigree? Of course, I heard her mention it, though I did not associate your name with the matter. I remember, now, she didn't like the curl of the boar's tail in the coat-of-arms and the crows in the left-hand corner of the shield. She wasn't pleased, also, with some of her ancestors, those you said were Elizabethan buccaneers; and as to the motto: 'Touch not the cat but a glove,' she declared that it was horrible. It isn't a nice motto for a girl, you must admit, Arthur."

"Well, why didn't she write and

tell me so?" he protested, "so that I could have made alterations."

"But how could you make alterations in a pedigree?" asked Maud, in unsophisticated accents.

"Not alterations exactly," Wakefield explained; "but I might have traced another descent. In any case, however, I think I ought to be compensated for my trouble."

"You do?"

"Of course I do. I wrote to her to-day asking for payment, and if she doesn't comply, well, I shall be obliged to place the matter in the hands of a collector," and the face of the United States College of Heraldry assumed an expression of severity, as if determined, in the vindication of a just cause, to proceed to the legal extremity.

"Oh, you cruel man!" exclaimed Maud. "I could never have believed you would treat a woman in that way —you, too, who profess to be so enamored of the age of chivalry. How could you be so ungallant?"

"And why not, pray?" he demanded. "I don't see why a woman should be excused from the obligations she has contracted. I cannot afford to work for pure philanthropy."

"Well, I'm quite sure she won't pay unless you return to Buffalo and sue her in person."

"Return to Buffalo? Why, what has my returning to Buffalo got to do with it? Such an idea is preposterous."

"I'm sure she won't pay you otherwise," reiterated Maud, decisively.

Wakefield uttered an exclamation of derision, and then gazed searchingly into the face of his fair visitor, who returned the look with aggravating naïveté.

"Look here, Miss Maud," said he, "I believe you are at the bottom of this. Confess, now, that Gertrude Jackson and Maud Allen are one and the same person."

"Not quite that," she replied, "because Gertrude did attend to the correspondence."

"Then you are at the bottom of the matter?"

"Are you going to put me into jail?" she asked, demurely.

"Are you going to settle my account, madam?" he demanded, with assumed severity.

"Never!" she replied, decisively. "That is, unless you return to Buffalo and sue me."

Wakefield laughed good-humoredly. "Well," he replied, "as I'm undone by my only client, there seems to be no other course open. I shall return to Buffalo and—and sue you."

"You'd better remember my motto," she retorted. "'Touch not the cat but a glove.'"

"A very good motto, I think," he replied. "Permit me to compliment you upon your Elizabethan ancestry."

Thus it came about that the affairs of the United States College of Heraldry in South Washington Square passed into the hands of a fair receiver.



IN BLISSFUL IGNORANCE

STRANGER—I understand you lynched the wrong negro yesterday.

SOUTHERNER—Yes; but he didn't know it. We didn't tell him what we were lynching him for.



WIILLIE (*reading in school*)—"London is famous for its *dense frogs*."

CONCERNING ONE OMAR KHAYYÁM

[NOTE: It is the literary custom at the present time for a writer to sign as much of his name as space will permit.]

IN Nishápúr, a city of the country Khorássán,
 By the sun-kissed Elbruz mountains, where twelve thousand rivers ran
 In laughing, noisy shallows, or in dumb and silent deeps,
 Through fields of blazing tulips, from lofty green-clad steeps;
 Where the eglantine and lily, and the rose that never fades,
 Filled the lazy air with fragrance, and the purple evening shades
 Were tremulous with music when the bulbul, from its tree,
 Sent forth its murmurous love-song in liquid melody—
 A thousand years ago the stars looked from their sapphire throne
 And saw a man who sought to make their secrets all his own;
 Who raised his eyes to Heaven and swept his flying pen
 In poesy athwart the doubts and hopes and fears of men.
 “Who art thou?” asked they, wondering. He answered them: “I am
 G. ud-din Abul Fath Omar Ibn Ibrahim al-Khayyám.”

POSTSCRIPT: His first name was Ghias, but there was so much danger of the ignorant Sufis pronouncing it “Guy us,” which Mr. Khayyám wouldn’t have done for the world, that he parted his name in the middle and got along with the rest of it as best he might.

WILLIAM J. LAMPTON.



KEPT THEM SEPARATE

NIPPER—I never let my politics interfere with my religion.

TUCKER—Well, why should you? You never let your religion interfere with your politics.



UNWORTHY OF IT

MABEL—And another thing, Fred; father’s salary has been doubled.

FRED (*who has been accepted*)—You don’t tell me! What have I done, dearest, to deserve all this?



AMBITION is a balloon that carries no parachute.

THE FACE OF AN ANGEL

By J. D. Daskam

STRICKLAND pushed his chair back a trifle and looked down the long table. The air was warm and perfumed with the Parma violets scattered over the glossy linen. The candles threw lovely shadows on the shoulders of the women, whose eyes grew brighter as the dinner advanced, and whose soft, high voices babbled unceasingly, until his senses, long used to the silence of the plains, fairly ached with the steady din.

Such a strange party! But Bobby Henshawe always asked just the people he wanted, whether they were chorus girls or Vere de Veres, and he knew any number of either class. To-night, except for the four or five women and the men next them, who, he said, represented the effete aristocracy, and seemed to have been imported to give tone to a company a little more bohemian than even he had yet essayed to manage at one time, there were no faces that Strickland had ever seen before. That meant little, of course. He had been two years away and utterly cut off from a life that puzzled and wearied him now in all its flippant, foolish phases.

How had he lived for twenty-five years among these clever, idle, futile, grown-up children, working so ceaselessly to amuse themselves, flying so feverishly from the *ennui* they dreaded so pitifully! It seemed to him a very sad thing that such handsome, able women, such clever— What were they laughing at?

"I shall certainly tell it. If Bobby wants to leave the table, he may. Hold his hand, somebody, and calm

his nervous starts. Do sit still, Bobby, and don't make such faces!"

Bobby smiled hopelessly. "Oh, tell it, then, and for heaven's sake, Parker, cut it short!" he growled. "They know it, anyhow."

"But we *love* it so!" A beautiful gypsy leaned dramatically across her neighbor's plate and pursed up her lips at Bobby. "It makes me so happy just to know that such heavenly things can really happen!"

"Certainly," said Parker, "that's the way we all feel. You see," to the table generally, "Bobby had engaged to get Daisy Koster to come up from the play and take tea with Miss Richards and a few friends, just as she was, in her costume, you know, and sing us a song. Of course, Miss Richards couldn't ask her, but Bobby, unfortunately for his subsequent reputation, could, so he pleasantly agreed to sit through the matinée and bring her back. You all know," with a dramatic gesture, "how truly amiable is the character of our dear Robert, how easily urged to little deeds of kindness he is, how—" Here laughter drowned the narrative, which proceeded, nevertheless, audibly to a few, for they appeared to be understanding when Strickland finally heard again.

"Of course, Bobby was vexed. He hadn't expected such a reply, and he had told Dick Streeter to come around on the strength of Daisy's consenting. You know Dick looks just like Arthur, whose duties as rector rather interfered with his accompanying his brother. So when our dear Robert went to church with the family, and also went to sleep—in that respect unaccompanied by his dear ones, let us

hope—Arthur, who preached about the woman of Samaria, who was at a well, you know, lifted his voice and asked, fervently, 'And though she was beckoned so lovingly, did she come?' That woke Bobby up, and he stared at Arthur, who really does resemble his sinful brother shockingly, and when Arthur stared at him—unconsciously, of course—and demanded, vigorously, 'Why did she not come?' our darling Robert gasped and mumbled thickly, 'She said 'twas too swell for her!' What more he might have been led to say we do not—cannot know. He was suppressed—"

"Now look here, Parker," began the helpless Bobby, but the renewed laughter reduced him to a bitter silence. At length he growled, "I didn't say *all* that, I know. I just—"

"Oh, yes, dear, but you did, you truly did!" cried Mrs. Jack Archer, gaily. "I sat in the next pew, and, Bobby, I heard you! It was heavenly! And my niece from school was quite hysterical and had to have salts and Italian mints and a fan. Jack went to church three times in succession on the strength of it, but nothing has happened since, so he has given it up. He's quite disappointed, poor fellow."

Strickland looked curiously at the woman who had just spoken. He had gone to dancing-school with her and led the cotillion often with the prettiest bud of her season—once he had wanted to marry her. He fancied those violet eyes smiling into his over the pine table in his office, he fancied that ivory satin gown sweeping the floor of his one-storied house, twelve miles from a white man, and muttered scornfully to himself.

"I beg your pardon?" said the woman next him, softly. He turned and noticed her for the first time. The man at her left had talked to her steadily till now, and her face had been turned away from Strickland. Now, as he looked full at her, he almost gasped in her face, so young she seemed, so wholly different from the company around her.

She was dressed in a gown of gray tulle, so plainly made that her straight,

slim figure might have been that of a schoolgirl. Only a ruffle at the neck broke the smooth, smoky folds, and her throat and wrists were absolutely bare of jewels. Her brown hair was coiled smoothly on her neck and a few tiny locks fell over her forehead. Beneath them her eyes, large, gray as her gown, looked at him like a child's. One great dimple in her soft, white cheek showed when she spoke. About her was an atmosphere of such purity, simplicity and quaint, childlike weariness of the whole thing that Strickland felt an overwhelming curiosity—how had she come there? Her name he did not remember, if he had ever heard it.

Moved by a sudden impulse—for the etiquette of New Mexico is not restrictive, and he had been greatly alone for two years—Strickland smiled at her and answered her eyes rather than her question.

"I was only wondering how people kept their self-respect, or even their self-interest, in this sort of life," he said, quickly. Her eyes widened, she turned almost to face him, and said: "You find it dull, then?" She spoke with a slow, dainty precision, as one not quite sure of the vernacular of these hurried, vulgar, chattering people among whom fate had cast her.

He nodded. "Dull, and worse," he said. "I have grown unduly moral in a land where I am the only educated man for twenty miles around—I have thought of my responsibilities. I used to be of this world and in it, too; now I am neither."

"You are a priest?" she asked, again meeting his eyes fully with that strange, childish air of remoteness and unconsciousness of self.

"Heavens, no!" He looked at the soft, white oval of her face and added, daringly, yet in earnest: "No more than you are a priestess!"

She seemed to understand him—was it possible? She was not even offended. She looked at the laughing, chattering crowd and swept her hand with a dramatic gesture along the table. "You meant this world

here!" she said. "You are in the right. They are fools. I am very tired of them."

And then, talking very low, Strickland began to tell her of the empty, wind-swept places where he had cast his life. How he had thrown angrily behind him, because of a heartless woman's trifling, the city and all the people and the life that seemed to him now so futile and trivial. How he had experienced danger and privation and loneliness, and cursed himself for a fool many times, and yet had stayed on and tried to do something for the betterment of the Indians he had grown to love as one loves those whom he tries to help to help themselves.

He was no prig, this Strickland, but he had learned hard the lesson that no man may with decency live simply to amuse himself; and, inspired to gain this lovely child's sympathy, he opened his heart to her as he had opened it to no one since the day he left his kind, two years before.

And when he had finished, half-ashamed of such a boyish confidence, he was not hurt that she did not answer him except by a fuller glance from her deep, gray eyes, for he seemed to understand that she preferred to be silent. So he looked at her eagerly now and then, wrapped in that cool, remote atmosphere of hers, proud to be able to understand her, thanking heaven that he could take away from the dinner, that had so tired him when he had tried to feel in place, a great satisfaction now. For to have known such a soul, even as he knew her for a few moments, renewed his trust in women. There were then some of them who, like himself, were tired of the aimless life; perhaps even planning to escape from it as he was then.

What! were they going? Yes, and all together. Bobby had said that there was no need for the men to wait—he thought it a silly idea—they must all come up, and Parker would do them an act from the last play he'd seen; he would take all the parts at once.

So they raced up the stairs in a pretty, effective confusion, and when Mrs. Jack Archer tripped on the first step they made a chair and carried her up, a flushed, protesting, laughing bundle of chiffon. And Kitty Campbell, leading lady at the Emporium, went up, for a bet, on the outside, holding by the balustrade, beseeching somebody to help her over the top, in a voice whose exquisite contralto could not be concealed by the laughter that confused her broken sentences.

How vulgar they were! How lacking in proportion and repose! Ahead of Strickland moved a gray, soft gown; on the rail above his hand rested that bare, white wrist. In the press he touched her arm, and it was as cool and smooth as a white rose at night.

He lost her, somehow, and hunted the rooms through in vain. As he passed the billiard-room he caught a glimpse of Parker striding pompously up and down the table, singing a chorus from the opera, and just as he left the crowd, for he could not find her there, they persuaded Kitty to mount the table, and her great, rich voice dignified even the song she sang for them.

Strickland hunted up Mrs. Jack and tied her fluffy party-boots while she chattered. "That? Why, don't you know who that is? But then, if you will live with the untutored savage, you know! Why, I saw you talking with her as if you were great friends—you naughty! I don't know what her real name is—Flaurin or Flandrin, or something. But everybody calls her by her—her other name, *La Cigale*. She gets ridiculous salaries—hundreds a night, Jack says. What? Oh, songs and dances, of course. Awfully clever, too. I've never been—Bobby told Jack I mustn't. Isn't it horrid, though? But I shall go yet. She's very seldom seen at dinners and things—awfully proud, you know. Isn't that funny? Bobby only got her on condition that she shouldn't speak unless she liked—we were all warned. Like

royalty, you know. She's only here for the money, of course. She was a great success in Paris, but there's more money here. They say she's awfully bored—finds us rather slow—longs for dear Paris, you know, and all that. . . . Oh, I don't know. Twenty-eight or thirty, they say. It's her wonderful complexion and her

eyes, I suppose. . . . You can't come to my tea? Oh, Mr. Strickland, how cruel! I think the untutored savage might wait! Back to-morrow! Well, write an awfully clever book and send me a copy, won't you? Good-bye—so glad to have seen you, even if you won't come to my tea."



THE HAPPY ASS

(The chief beauty of the following poem is that it is both rhyme and blank verse—rhyme according to the spelling and blank verse according to the pronunciation.)

THROUGH twilight's gold I heard the wild ass bray
 His love song, which resounded o'er the quay,
 While he, well knowing that for joy he should
 Cavort in glee, kicked up the mossy mould,
 And with the energy of lusty youth
 Once more let off his everlasting mouth,
 Which set on edge two polka-dotted calves,
 Until they, too, oped wide their safety valves
 And fled like me—and I flew like the wolf,
 Or e'en the hit ball in the game of golf.

R. K. MUNKITTRICK.



AS FREQUENTLY NOTED

MAJOR GORE—Liquor improves with age.

COLONEL CORKRIGHT—Yes, suh; the olduh a man grows the bettuh he likes it.



NOT LIKELY TO

LENA—So you have a serious objection to marrying Mr. Gotrox?

MAUDE—Yes; but I'll not let a little thing like that keep me from it.



DARE-DEVIL BARKIS

SHE—Are you a woman-hater?

He—Oh, no; but I'm willing to run the risk if you'll just say the word.